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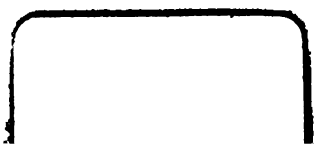

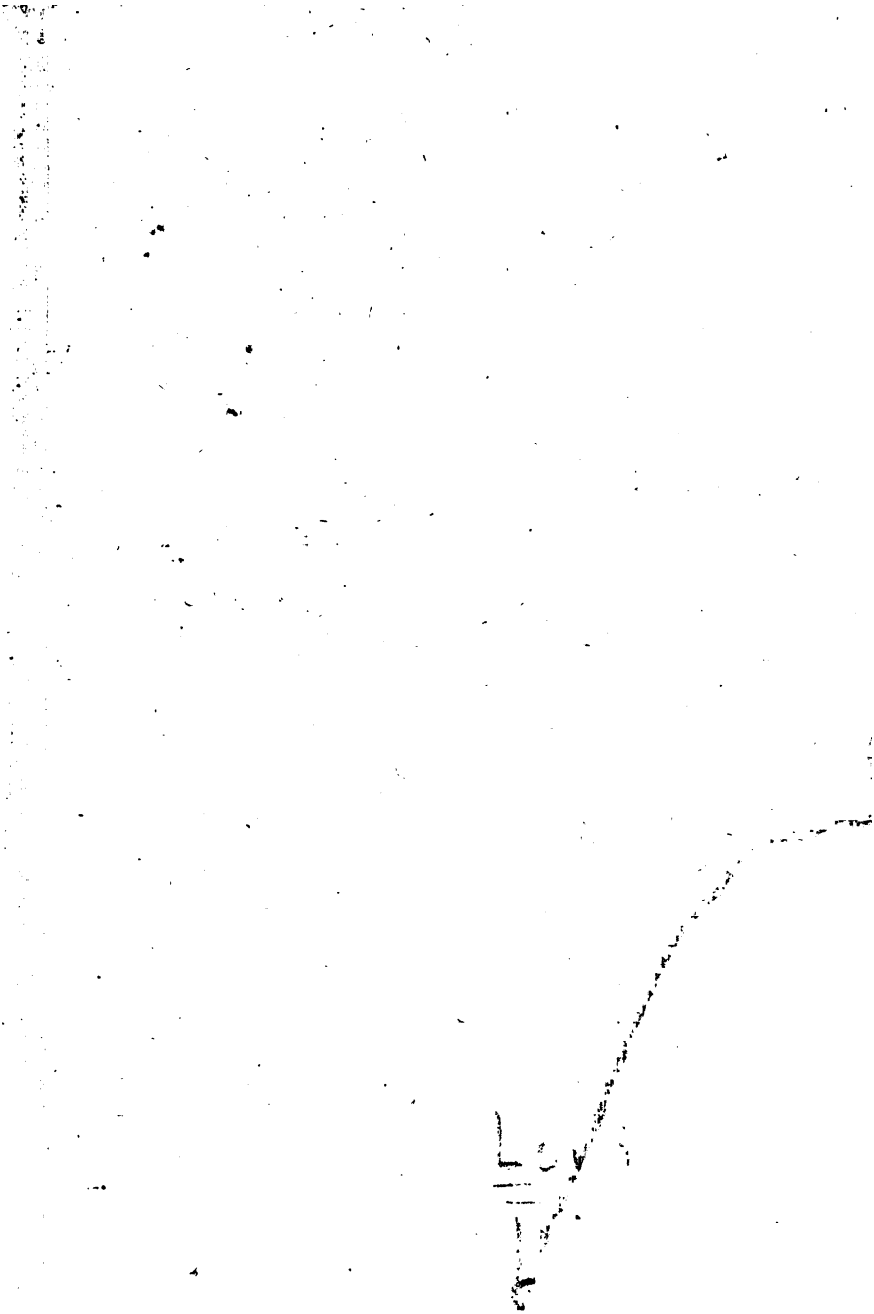

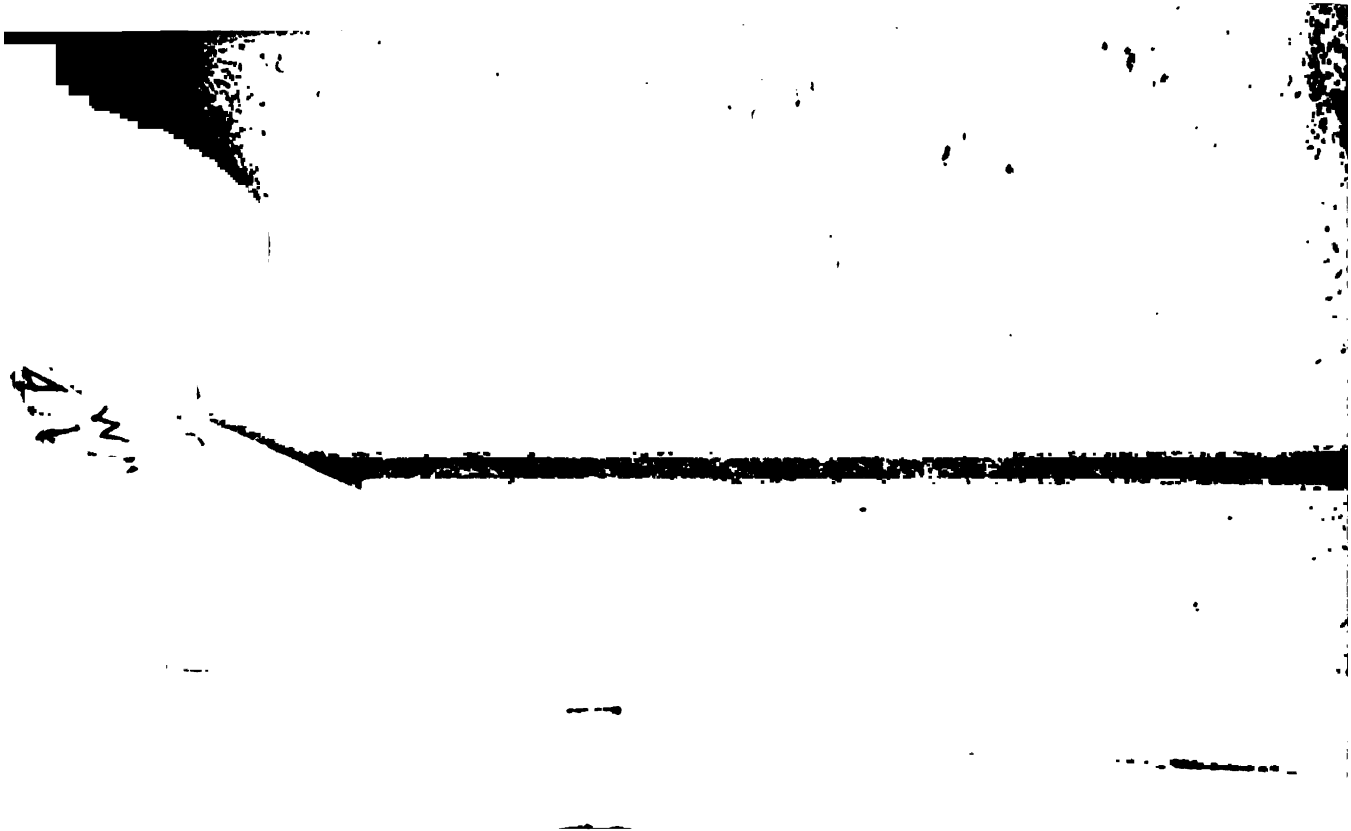

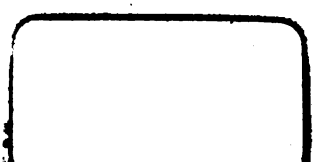

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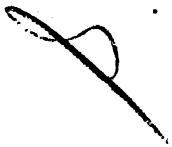
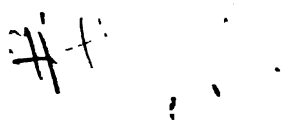




ГІВКУВА
ЬЛВГІС
ЖЕЛЛОЖ

MY LIFE OUT OF PRISON

CHAPTER I

AUGUST FIRST, nineteen hundred and eleven!

To you that probably conveys nothing; to me it is a never-to-be-forgotten day, the marking of an epoch in my life — a life up to that time brimful of tragic experience and vivid impressions. Since that time my life has been equally vivid, if not tragic, though in a different way.

It was on that date, after spending ten years behind stultifying steel bars and stolid stone walls, ten years in stripes and in the midst of degradation, that I was paroled from San Quentin prison.

To-day this prison is the domicile of the broken-spirited ex-political boss of San Francisco, the lifelong habitat of hundreds of hopeless men and women, the living grave of nearly 2000 human beings, each of whom is a cog in the ponderous, grinding wheel of human progress, for no man nor woman suffering a ruptured life in a prison cell is a less important unit in the evolution of humanity than is the money king, the man with the hoe or the minister of the gospel. No human being has yet lived and no human being now lives who has not or does not serve an important purpose in the great scheme of things.

The fact that each human being comes into the world with latent propensities, certain temperamental characteristics and well-defined likes and dislikes has always been a source of speculation for me. I believe that every thought of every human being is of immense value.

I have lived with these 2000 human beings at San Quentin, and with 200,000 others in prisons scattered throughout this country every day and every hour since my release, and I shall probably so continue to live during the remainder of my life.

Several weeks before my release the managing editor of *The Bulletin* came to San Quentin to visit a friend who is serving fourteen years. While in the warden's office waiting until his friend should be brought from the jute mill the managing editor, at the suggestion of the warden, read an "accepted" manuscript which had been written by one of the prisoners. It was the story of a boy who ran away from a country home, joined a circus, fell by the wayside, was committed to prison for a comparatively trivial offence and died there in the arms of an old convict without letting his "people" know. The story impressed the managing editor and he asked to see the author.

When the warden stepped from his private office and came to my desk in an adjoining room I knew so soon as I looked at him that he was going to ask me something unusual.

"I know you don't see visitors," he began, "but there is a gentleman in my office who wants to see you and I think you ought to see him. It will probably result in good for you."

I asked who it was and, on being told, impulsively agreed to go in. I had heard of the man many times, and in anything save a favorable way, so I was totally unprepared for what followed.

Instead of meeting a self-satisfied, self-righteous, implacable ogre, as I had anticipated, I found myself shaking hands with a tall, well-proportioned, soft-spoken man of middle-age. The hand clasp went down to my toes

and then up into my brain and I instinctively realized that I had met a man-brother. After the hand clasp I remained standing, as is the custom with prisoners when in the presence of "superiors."

"Take a seat," said the tall man. "Why don't you sit down?"

I looked at the warden, who had swung toward us in his swivel chair, and he nodded assent.

"The warden has permitted me to read a manuscript of yours," said the visitor, still standing. "I hope you don't mind. How long have you been writing?"

"I've been studying to write for about two years," I replied.

"The warden tells me you have declined to see visitors since you have been here," he ventured. "Why is that?"

"Because I'm serving time," I answered. "What use to remind one's self of life?"

"Isn't there a parole law?" he asked. "I can arrange to give you work, I think. Are you eligible?"

"Yes," I replied, almost eagerly, "but the parole law has walls around it, too."

"But it is for just such men as you. The warden tells me you have rendered splendid service on the books, that you have ability and understanding and that you have done a great deal to help your fellow prisoners. After reading this story of yours I feel sure you have human sympathy, despite your own experience. Will you come to work for us if a parole can be secured?"

"Certainly," I replied, "provided I can fill the bill."

"All right," he said, "get your papers ready and we'll see what can be done."

Back at my desk I tried to go on with the accounts, but the figures danced. I closed the ledger and walked back

and forth. I had been looking forward to applying for parole, but without hope that I should succeed in getting it. My prison record had been good, but I was a "two-time loser" and that was an obstacle over which many an aspirant for self-redemption had stumbled and failed. Experience and observation had made me realize that a prisoner who allowed himself to look forward to his cross-examination by the board of directors with the self-assurance that he would "win out" and secure their signatures for his parole was ill-advised. I had seen prisoners with perfect records "turned down cold" by the board for no apparent reason. And yet I now found myself beginning to think of the outside. An insidious feeling of positiveness gradually smothered my doubts. I suppose it was the prominence and power of the man who had offered me employment that caused this change of mind. That night I wrote him a letter, enclosing the regulation "employment blank" for him to sign and return. He did so promptly, and in addition wrote a personal letter to the board of directors asking favorable consideration for my application.

It may seem strange, but in spite of the fact that I was to be the beneficiary I rebelled against the influence which I knew that letter would have. I had seen so many prisoners, many of them far less deserving than the ones they left behind, secure parole, not on merit, but on "outside influence." To me it seemed, and it still seems, that a prisoner should gain parole solely on his record, on his manifestation while undergoing the rigors of imprisonment.

A few weeks later when the board of directors convened for the monthly meeting my parole was authorized, to take effect on the first of August.

I had seventeen days and nights to wait.

My term had been suddenly cut down by more than four years, but those seventeen days seemed seventeen eternities.

Perhaps the principal reason why the days dragged was because I was trying to evolve a method by which I hoped to smuggle a quantity of notes pertaining to the prison management out into the world with me. I had been keeping a diary for a number of years, and up to within six months of my release I had succeeded in getting the notes out of the prison undetected. But my avenue of communication with the "outside" had been suddenly blocked and the notes which had accumulated in the meantime were important. Had I been caught with them my parole would have been cancelled. To be caught trying to smuggle them out would mean even worse — it would mean the dungeon, the jacket, perhaps solitary confinement for a year or two. It was the custom of the Captain of the Yard to inspect everything taken out of the prison by paroled or discharged prisoners, and he had such a long stretch of experience behind him that it was almost impossible to hoodwink him.

After racking my brains for many days I finally decided to take a desperate risk. What that risk was, and how it succeeded, will be told in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER II

the night of July 31, 1911, I retired as usual, but sleep.

ne o'clock, and all's well!" "Ten o'clock, and ell!" "Eleven, twelve, one, two, three 'and all's assailed my waiting ears from the deep-throated of the night watch outside as the hours dragged fter the three o'clock call I got up and paced the ı my stockinged feet. I didn't put on my brogans ɜ I didn't want to disturb the sleep of my cellmate ifer who had sixteen years' service chalked up ; Time. As was quite often the case in his sleep, mate talked in the Indian language. He had been nd raised on the frontier, in Oregon, and, when a ad learned to talk to the Indians in their native . When awake he could not remember a single f the strange language, but in his sleep he spoke y. This should be interesting to psychologists.

:her reason why I did not put on my brogans was ɜ it was against the rules for a prisoner to walk :ell after taps at nine o'clock, no matter how sick, rous or worried. The anguish consequent upon a ɔushed through the wicket after lock-up, a letter of the death of wife, mother or child must be in silence and on a hard cot by a prisoner. Imnent, you know, connotes absence of human emond feelings in the breast of a convict.

ɜe steps one way and three steps back — three ɔne way and three steps back — three steps one ıd three steps back. I thought of animals I had

seen at the zoo worrying back and forth with deadened eyes turned persistently toward the gaping spectators. I thought of the thousands of sleeping pariahs about me. I recalled cells into which I had looked in awe; the cells of lifers with the stone floor worn into three hollows, each the size of a human palm. Was it the hand of God or the hand of man?

I, a human being, with thousands of others, had gone through long years of confinement in a cage, eating coarse food, garbed in shameful stripes, prodded on the slightest occasion for the least exhibition of initiative or self-will. I remembered a dog which one of our neighbors had kept chained up when I was a boy, and how dangerously vicious the animal had become. I remembered seeing a horse which had been confined in a box-stall all winter and which had been unmanageable when hitched up in the spring. I remembered hearing that a canary bird after being confined in a cage and having its food brought to it will starve to death, with plenty of food in sight, when released from its cage. Despite the fact that I was on the very threshold of freedom — which every prisoner looks forward to as the end of his misery — I felt a great bitterness welling within me. At first I entertained it — it soothed me to do so — and then came the revulsion. No, I was at fault; human beings, individually, were not responsible for this unconscionable torture of their kind. The majority of them were poor, and poor people are not cruel. Quite clearly, for the first time in my life, it flashed upon me that humanity was not responsible for the needless suffering of men in prison, of the insane in asylums, of the soiled doves in bagnios, of the hungry children in the slums. It was greed for gold and man-made laws foisted upon the masses in the names of order and protection by the masters of money.

ingly and yet intensely, live in many minds. The majority of prisoners on being paroled or discharged are almost instantly forgotten by the others, save perhaps one or two intimate acquaintances or cellmates. But Gordon was remembered, and not a man but would have staked a month's rations of tobacco that he would "make good."

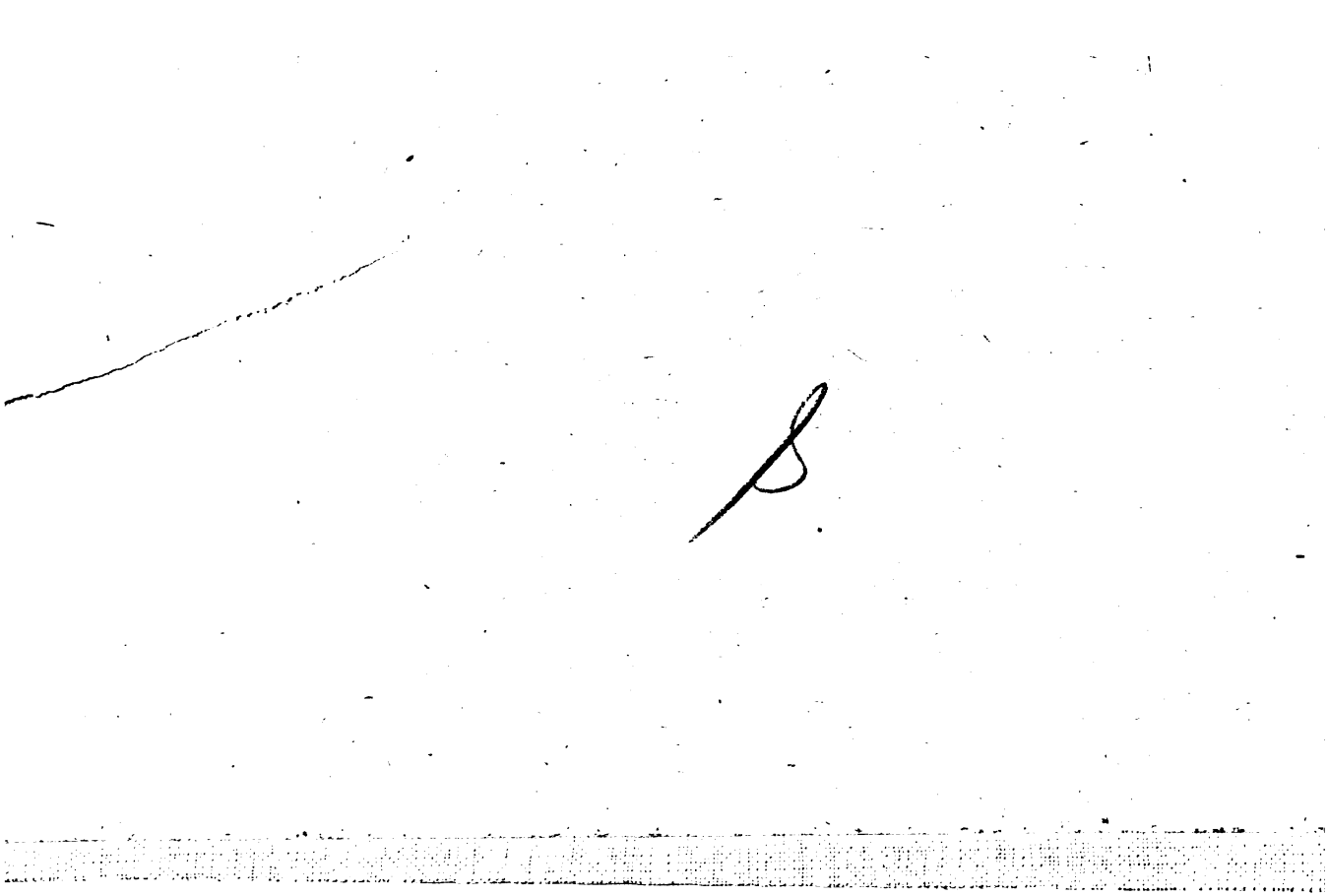
Gordon was an efficient man and succeeded in securing a position the day following his release. He proved capable and was advanced rapidly. Several months after his release he met a girl whose charm attracted him. Urged by the life force — the force that rules the universe — he told her of his past and asked her to be his wife. She consented, and they were soon married.

Nearly a year passed and the future looked rosy. He had been promoted again and was getting a good salary. His employers reposed the utmost confidence in him besides liking him tremendously.

And then came the tragedy. Gordon thought he had paid the penalty when the iron gate clanged him into the world of men, but he hadn't. Quite often, more often than people think is true, the real penalty for breaking the law lies in wait for a man outside the prison portcullis.

One day the policeman who had arrested Gordon for overdrawing his bank account passed the office where the young husband worked — an office on the ground floor and in full view from the street through large plate-glass windows. The policeman saw Gordon sitting at a desk, with a large, open safe beside him.

The policeman gasped. He rubbed his eyes. Such a combination as an ex-convict within reaching distance of an open safe was unthinkable, it was monstrous! He had seen "ex-cons" kneeling before safes with dark-lantern and "soup" and the other implements and "persuaders" necessary for forcible entrance, but this was the first time



where, excepting the finished portions of the new State highway, have I seen a better road.

At last we arrived at the Green Brae station. It was the same old barn-like structure, but had been lately painted. While waiting for the train we stood in groups and talked. I was singled out by an attorney who had served two years. Behind the walls he had been exclusive, he had evinced a disinclination to mix with the prisoners about him, but now he seemed anxious for company, for some one to talk with.

When the train came gliding out of the tunnel and stopped at the platform I noted that it was an electric, and recalled the shrill whistles I had so often heard in the early night hours when all was still at the great prison. I had gone to San Quentin on a steam train, drawn by an antiquated locomotive.

We clambered awkwardly aboard, most of us into the smoker, though the lawyer and myself went into the second car. The little lengthwise seat near the door was vacant and we sat down. My companion instantly started to talk in the most unconcerned way, just as if he were used to taking the train each morning, but I felt self-conscious, and wanted to look out of the window. Had I been alone I should have chosen a crosswise seat.

Presently a newsboy entered the car and the lawyer bought all three morning papers. He handed me one and I tried to read, but couldn't. I imagined everybody in the car knew who we were, and besides, the things about me, the passengers, the packages, the suitcases, the passing landscape, were far more attractive at the moment than a newspaper.

At Sausalito we were lost in the crowd of passengers scurrying to the boat from other trains, and I felt more at ease.

"Let's go down and have breakfast," suggested my companion as we went aboard the boat.

I had been looking forward to the trip across the bay for years. I had pictured myself again and again standing on the upper deck watching the scene, and breathing the free air. But I was afraid I might hurt his feelings if I refused, and besides I had not partaken of breakfast at the prison.

In the dining-room we seated ourselves at one of the tables and ordered tenderloin steak, coffee and rolls. I noticed two of the other paroled prisoners sitting at the nearby lunch counter, and they both ordered pie.

"Giving themselves dead away," commented my companion when I called his attention to them.

Secretly I envied them, but had not the courage to say so. He imagined I concurred in the patronizing judgment latent in his words.

Breakfast finished, we went upstairs and stood on the front apron of the ferryboat. I looked for signs of the great conflagration which we had read about in the eastern papers and the magazines (California papers are not permitted in the penitentiary), but all I could see from the distance was a great and new city. As we neared the landing my companion became uneasy.

"I expect to meet my wife," he announced, "so I'll say good-bye now. Come out and see me some time."

As soon as the boat was made fast he rushed up the causeway, dropped his suitcase, and embraced a little dark-haired woman who awaited him under the inner arcade of the ferry building. They went away with arms linked, smiling, and chatting like two happy birds. Have you ever felt that you would rather be some one else, some one other than yourself? I had such a thought as I walked out into the glare and commotion of the em-

barcadero, where I stopped to search in my pockets for the address of my employers.

"How far up Market Street is the 700 block?" I inquired of a man in a grey suit and straw hat who was leaning against one of the pillars and reading a paper.

"Why, seven blocks of course," he replied, regarding me curiously.

That didn't sound far, so I decided to walk, and took the sunny side. The noise of the street cars and vehicles bothered me, but I tried to see everything. The scurrying people, going in all directions seemed strange. Never before, even though I had been raised in and near a great metropolis, had I realized so keenly what a rush life is.

Presently a haberdasher's window, resplendent in gaudy ties and fancy shirts alluringly arranged against a velvet background caught my eye, and I paused. I would need clothes — all I had in the world were on my back — but these were too showy; besides I had lots of time, there would be no lock-up bell.

A little farther on I unconsciously put my right hand into my trousers pocket and my fingers encountered — MONEY.

Money! I was, then, really and truly free!

But was I? Had I not lived for years without it?

I drew it out and looked at it. There was $43 in gold and silver, the residue from the sale of stories which I had written in prison — the residue after putting up a deposit of $25 with the warden to pay for the expenses of my return should I violate my parole.

Money! In spite of the fact that I had not had any for so long, here it was suddenly thrust upon me, and I was supposed to use it temperately and judiciously. Most men coming out had only $5 with which to face the world, with which to take up the broken thread of life,

and here I was with eight times that amount. I was fortunate.

Suddenly I was seized by an irresistible desire — a desire to spend. I could only prove my freedom by exercising it, I must buy something, no matter what. Just then a ragged boy with freckled face shoved a box of chewing gum toward me.

"Chewing gum, mister?" he pleaded.

That settled it. Here was an opportunity to spend money, and he had called me "Mister." As I handed him a dime in exchange for a package I indeed felt free. Millionaires had nothing on me at that blissful moment.

It sounds foolish, almost childish, doesn't it? But it's true, and it's but a faint picture of the emotions and the bewilderment experienced by every man whose natural expressions have been beaten down to a humdrum abnormality through a term of prison years. That desire to spend plays havoc with the five dollars to which most discharged or paroled prisoners are limited. It's one of the prime illustrations of the failure of the present repressive prison system. I have since had it from the lips of discharged prisoners that they have spent as much as two dollars out of a lone $5 gold piece for their first meal. Asked why, they didn't know; they couldn't tell.

On the other hand I have come in contact with discharged prisoners who spent each cent grudgingly, who made the $5 last two weeks. This narrative of facts will contain many concrete stories — some tragedies, some comedies — concerning my fellow wanderers in the great prison called civilization.

CHAPTER III

The walk up Market Street — seven blocks — seemed interminable, and long before I arrived at my destination I crossed to the shady side. In prison one cannot walk more than 100 yards in a straight line. Distance has no meaning, save in memory, yet I have known prisoners who made it a practice to walk two miles each night back and forth in their cells. The cells at San Quentin are seven and a half feet long. By pacing the cell 1500 times a distance of two miles is covered.

When I arrived at the building which I sought I went inside and got on the elevator. The operation of the thing interested me immensely. True, I had seen and had been on elevators before my incarceration, but the motion of being carried upward was strange, almost uncanny. The elevator seemed like a living thing.

When I got off at the fourth floor a boy met me and asked for my card. The request embarrassed me, and I made a motion as if to search my pockets, but stopped. Instead I scribbled my name on a piece of paper.

After I had waited a short time the boy reappeared and led me through a large room where a dozen or more men and women were working furiously on typewriters, and then I was ushered into a private office and found myself confronting the big man I had met in the warden's office a few weeks before. He greeted me with the same hand-clasp and asked me to sit down.

"Well, how does it feel?" he asked, proffering a cigar.

I mumbled something to the effect that it "felt fine."

We talked for a few minutes, and then I told him I had not yet reported to the parole officer, as I had been instructed to do. "There was a bunch came over this morning," I explained, "and I didn't want to wait, so I came up here first."

"Well, you'd better go down and report and then come back here. We'll go to lunch together," he replied.

Somehow, despite the fact that he was my employer, the invitation to lunch with him did not seem incongruous. I guess it was the offhand way, the absence of patronage, in which he said it that made me take it as a matter of course. He let me out of a private door and I got on the elevator to go down. I felt slightly disconcerted when the thing started. "Suppose it should drop?" I found myself thinking. I recalled a newspaper account I had read of a discharged prisoner who was killed by a train the morning he got out. I was glad when we reached the ground floor, and made haste to board a car for the Ferry building, where the parole office was located.

At the parole office I went through the formality of signing my name in a book, and was instructed that I must report there on the first of each month, and that I must each time bring a statement, signed by my employer, showing the amount of my earnings and expenditures and vouching for my good conduct.

"And any time you need advice or are in trouble come to me. Don't be afraid. I'm your friend," said the parole officer as I passed out.

The words impressed me, they seemed so sincere. How sincere they were will be disclosed later.

At luncheon I found myself gazing at the rich tapestries, as well as the occupants of a marble dining-room,

notwithstanding a strong effort not to do so. I found myself making a comparison between where I was and where I had been five hours before. It seemed incredible. It seemed as if I had been wafted to some strange planet where joy and laughter and harmony prevailed. The orchestra was playing softly among the palms in the distance, and the subdued daylight, made unreal by dazzling electroliers, infused the air with glamour. The bare prison cell with its fetid atmosphere and bedbugs obtruded again and again. I could not forget.

When the waiter came with the food I felt that I ought to help him. Being waited on was absurd. I was used to waiting on myself. I had made my own bed and sewed on my own buttons for ten years.

While the coffee was being served I was asked for the first time if I had any newspaper experience, and had to admit that my only acquaintance with the "game" had been gleaned during a few months I worked in the business office of a small eastern daily.

"Oh, well, that doesn't make much difference in your case," said the big man. "You can learn, and besides I've got something mapped out for you. But I think you ought to take a few days off first to get your bearings; to become accustomed to the change."

I was grateful for this thoughtfulness as the kaleidoscopic happenings of the morning had left me bewildered, and doubtful of my ability to "make good."

"I've promised to go to see a friend in Oakland today," I said, "and I'll go over this afternoon if it's all right."

"All right?" he queried. "Why of course it's all right. You're free. Go wherever you wish; but I'd like to have you come up to the hotel for dinner to-night if you can get back in time, and care to come."

"I'll be glad to," I said. "What time, and what hotel?"

He named the place and the hour, and we parted on the sidewalk.

By going to Oakland I broke my parole — the first day I was out — but I was ignorant of the fact. My ticket-of-leave stated, among other things, that I should not leave the State. It did not say that I should not leave the county wherein I was employed. Later I learned that one of the rules of the parole officer forbade a paroled prisoner going from one county to another without special permission. By going to Oakland I exposed myself to a revocation of my parole and a return to prison for many years. I learned of the rule subsequently in quite a dramatic fashion, as I shall tell.

In Oakland I called on a professional man and then went to see a friend, a friend to whom I had smuggled from the prison my notes covering the daily happenings behind the walls for five years. Each time I had smuggled out a batch of these notes I had taken the risk of solitary confinement, the strait-jacket, loss of all hope for parole, and the forfeiture of "credits" for good behavior. But something had impelled me to take the chance again and again, and my studying at night had been with the sole idea of writing about the horrors and atrocities of the life when I got out. My intention was to do this under a nom-de-plume, and I never dreamed that I should have the opportunity to do it openly and still escape the revenge which such an act would bring upon the "offender" in 99 cases out of 100. The notes were for the purpose of establishing dates, facts and names beyond cavil.

As I was leaving my friend's house I was handed these notes, along with some other papers, all tied up into a

neat bundle. I have the notes and papers yet. While writing "My Life in Prison" I scarcely needed to refer to them, save to establish dates.

On getting back to the city I climbed the hill on Powell Street to the hotel. I was not very well acquainted in San Francisco and did not know that Powell Street cars passed the place, and the way I had been rebuffed when I had asked a question at the ferry building that morning made me chary to ask any one about the cars.

After walking the flat places of the prison for so long I found climbing that hill positively painful. Muscles which I had not used for years were brought into play, and remained sore for several days.

The big man met me in the lobby of the hotel, I was introduced to his wife, and we went in to dinner. By this time I was beginning to get used to things, and managed to appear quite unconcerned, though I couldn't help making contrasts between that dining-room and the cellar-like place where the prisoners "feed" at San Quentin.*

After dinner I spent an intensely interesting hour in conversation, and then, at the suggestion of my host, I left to go to one of the downtown hotels for the night.

When I had gone up the hill it had been daylight, but it was now dark, and the myriads of lights fascinated me. It is seldom that a prisoner gets out at night, and the breathing of the night air itself was a novelty. Reluctantly, at half past ten, I entered the hotel to which I had been directed, and was assigned to a room. It was then that I remembered a self-addressed envelope in my pocket; an envelope addressed to the warden, and which he had instructed me to use in writing to him the first day. The envelope brought back the scene in his office that morning when he had shaken hands with me and

*A new and sanitary dining hall has since been completed.

said: "I am confident of you, Lowrie. I know you are going to make good."

That was one of the good traits of the warden — he interviewed each paroled prisoner as he was leaving the prison, and gave a word of encouragement or advice.

I sat down and wrote the warden a letter, and then I wrote a letter to my mother. I had been thinking of her all day, and had been tempted to send a telegram that I was out, but remembered that she had written telling me a letter would do.

When I went down to mail my letters I saw a post-box in the lobby, but the lure of the lights on the street proved too much, so I went out. For two hours I walked up and down Market Street, each breath thrilling me with a sense of freedom.

When I finally returned to the hotel and retired it was not to sleep. The noise of the street cars was nothing less than awful after the grave-like stillness of nights in a cell. All night I lay awake, thinking, and getting up occasionally to look out of the window. Besides, the immensity of the room (a small hotel room) and the ability to stretch at ease on a big double bed was too luxurious to lose by going to sleep. The soft pillows, the sheets, the white towels on the rack, the hot and cold running water, the carpet, the lace curtains, all fascinated me. True, they were the commonplace, the unnoticed things in ordinary life, but I had just come from prison, and I was abnormal. I remember talking to myself as I lay there in the semi-darkness. I really would be ashamed to set down some of the things I said. It was like the babbling of a baby.

CHAPTER IV

BEFORE five o'clock in the morning I was up. I had not closed my eyes at all. Dressing was a kind of dream, a dream which recompensed, in a way, for lack of a natural sleep-dream. It was the second time I had put on "free" clothes, and I did it slowly, conscious of each movement, as if harnessing a horse or performing some operation I was unused to.

On Market Street I walked toward the ferry. The morning air was different from that at San Quentin. This morning I had emerged from a well-ventilated room, and yet the air seemed more invigorating than it had seemed on coming out of a miasmic cell the morning before.

There was a paucity of pedestrians, and street cars were few and far between. It was vastly different from the rumbling bustle and the tense-faced crowds of the day and night before. Near Second Street a man wearing a slouch hat and soiled collar, with his coat buttoned closely about him, accosted me for the "price of something to eat." He looked as if he, too, had been awake all night, but for a different reason. As he finished speaking I recognized him as "one of the boys," and he shrank visibly when I called him by name. In prison he had always boasted of what a "swell grafter" he had been outside, what money he had always "pulled off" in his trade as a "dip." I've forgotten just what I said to ease him, because I was conscious of the fact that he would have passed me without asking for assistance had

he realized before stopping me that I had known him in "stir." When we parted, however, after a few minutes' chatting — or, I should say, my chatting and his chattering, for he was cold — his embarrassment had vanished.

At the ferry end of Market Street I turned to the left along the waterfront, and strolled out onto one of the wharves where a gang of stevedores were feverishly loading a steamer. The men were on the run both going and coming, with perspiration dripping freely, and I wondered why — the world seemed so peaceful and sleepy and the sun so dilatory in coming up. From a man who was apparently directing the gang I learned that the stevedores were working for an hourly stipend, and had been "going" since 1 A. M. One man in particular, his neck bones enhanced by a red flannel undershirt, has remained stamped in my memory. He was panting like a dog, and seemed unfitted for the work. The hurry, I elicited, was occasioned for two reasons: that as much work as possible should be gouged from each man during each hour, and that the vessel might depart with the least possible delay, thus reducing the wages of the crew, or at least, some of the members; both commercial reasons, not humane ones.

The continual racing up and down and back and forth finally become monotonous — to me — and I left. As I walked away I did some thinking.

Suppose I had come out into the world without an assured job and were obliged to tackle work like that! How long would I last? Not only was I one of the great army who had been forced to subsist on food, the deadly monotony of which vitiated its meagre nutritive quality, but I, like many others, was unfitted structurally and by training to do such work.

At the street end of the wharf a clock informed me

that it was 7 A. M. and I decided to have breakfast and go to the office.

"Take a good walk about town; get used to things," was the advice I was given by my employer. "Don't be in too great a hurry. You've got lots to pick up; you're out of touch, out of step with things."

Although realizing that this was true, I resented it. I wanted to appear as one of the world.

At present the thought makes me smile, for, after more than two years' freedom, with many experiences, and unusual opportunities for rounding off rough edges, I am still unadjusted; I am still, in degree, lacking in qualities that were once naturally mine.

After all, the State pays its penalty for illogical treatment of those who offend against it.

I climbed the Powell Street hill, and was attracted by the ghastly ruins of former arrogance. A spring which was hidden under an immense pile of debris sent a trickling stream down to a flat place, where there was a patch of rank green. The significance came to me keenly. I saw the future of great cities: crumbling ruins, streams of water, rampant weeds and lazy insects. The picture came as a startling contrast to the sweating stevedores, toiling in the dawn of just one day, insulting Time by tallying it in "hours."

A little farther on I saw a bedraggled cat which had once been white, but was now the color of its most delectable prey — the mouse. Save for a few pathetic spots where it had tried to lick itself clean, it resembled a cartooned tramp. I write "cartooned tramp" because real tramps are more cleanly than people think. They wash and shave themselves just like other people, though they don't dress as conventionally, nor do they eat as often. I stood and watched the cat for quite a while.

It was sitting on the remains of what had once been a kitchen boiler, and was gazing out over the city in tragic dejection. I wondered what had become of all the cats rendered homeless by the great conflagration. Dogs, of course, had followed their owners in the mad flight, but cats are positive characters, they will not follow, save on the scent of food. Dogs will follow humans to starvation and death. Cats are not so civilized — whatever that means. I wondered how many cats had "come back" to former homes and meow-ed themselves to miserable death during the awful days when strong-hearted San Franciscans were adjusting themselves to life. This cat, apparently, had "come back" and learned to be a hobo — a startling example of the survival of the fittest.

That appealed to me — the hobo part as well as the fidelity to the remembrance of unearned nourishment. Even hoboes, you know, once thrived on mothers' milk, with chubby little fists at work to augment the supply. (Who hasn't seen a baby use its fists when suckling?) Yes, that wretched looking cat attracted me; it became the universe.

But when I stepped from the cracked and uneven sidewalk and tried to coax it to me it ducked into a cavity, like a prairie dog into its hole. I turned away, and had gone two blocks before it occurred that it was within my power and means to help the animal. The idea that flashed into my mind was that I could purchase and bring it some food.

While looking for a store where I could carry out this plan I came upon some men cleaning bricks. I noted that some of them wore rough gloves, and that those who were without gloves had blistered or bleeding hands. I learned that they were being paid so much per hundred bricks cleaned — I've forgotten the stipend, but it was

terrible — and that an inspector usually condemned 30 per cent. of the work as "incomplete." Those without gloves were the ones "just learning"— working for the "price of a meal."

Still searching for a store, on the cat's account, I came upon another scene. It was a little hut in the middle of a block where palatial residences had been razed. It was a ramshackle affair, with papered windows and drunken-looking doors and chimney, but it was a home, just as the "residences" had been. Strange that the little word "home" should cover so many kinds of "dwellings." Really, it's the biggest little word in the language of mankind, and we must not overlook the fact that beasts, too, have homes, some of them better than those occupied by our fellow humans, for I once knew a New York newsboy who slept under a wharf where the tide, on windy winter nights, tossed icy waves into his "bed." A prisoner's "hard cot" would have been heaven to that boy.

Am I forgetting my plea for humane treatment of prisoners, you ask? Not at all. That newsboy finally became a prisoner, and it was while he was yearning for "home"— under the wharf — that he told of his boyhood, his deal in the world early in the game of his life.

The little shack was distinctive in another way. It was fenced in and it had a flower garden. The touch of natural color against the background of man's ruins and desolation was like a marble masterpiece set in the centre of a mud hole. Is that contradictory?

At length I found a small butcher shop and bought 10 cents' worth of "cat meat." But when I returned to the place where I had seen the famished-looking feline, it was not in sight. So I picked my way to the rusted

kitchen boiler and placed the purchase where the cat had been sitting. As I retraced my steps I saw a scrap of meat on my finger. It had adhered when I had unwrapped the package. A flood of thought came upon me.

CHAPTER V

A LADY whom I had met casually before my commitment to prison sent me a book, and, being mentally hungry, I read it. I am not going to say what the book was, because I am not a propagandist. I am thoroughly convinced that whatever appeals to you as the truth is the best thing for you.

Meat! I had eaten it all my life — which means until I was 31 years old — without giving a thought. And then, after reading the book sent to me by the lady referred to, I read "The Gospel of Buddha," "The Ancient Wisdom," "The Light of Asia," "Voices From the Silence," "The Upanishads," "The Secret Doctrine," "The Holy Bible," "Science and Health" and other revelations. I also read Olive Schriner's "Dreams" and was fascinated by "The Hunter."

By reason of this reading, and other study, I became convinced of three things: First, that man has an immortal soul; second, that he is governed by a strict law of compensation; third, that the taking of life, save in personal self-defence, is wrong. To me the word "life" became all-inclusive, and I felt that I could no longer be a party to the taking of life in any form. I also felt that to take anything into the physical body which was not essential to its spiritual growth was an invitation for cuffs and kicks from the law — the law of compensation. At the time I was in prison, eating meat and using tobacco. I decided first to abstain from the use of tobacco — after fifteen years of cigarette smoking. Those

who have used tobacco for fifteen years and have tried to "quit" will appreciate what follows; while those who have never used tobacco will sniff self-complacently, and wonder why I am squandering all these words. But the average woman asked to give up corsets, rouge or tea will rebel, as will the average man asked to forswear tobacco, liquor or a starched collar. I made up my mind to "cut out" tobacco. I had used it so long that it had become a physical necessity, a hunger — or apparently so. I realized that it would be a struggle, but said to myself: "If you fail you commit mental and moral suicide; you are no longer a free entity, but a slave. With that thought in mind I stopped smoking, stopped using tobacco entirely. Ten days later I had a severe hemorrhage from the lungs, which the eating of salt failed to check. The prison physician was called and administered a glass of colorless liquid which checked the flow. After it was over I concluded that nature had expelled the remnants of the poison from my body, and I kept that thought in mind until the desire for tobacco had departed entirely. To state that I felt elated is putting it mildly; I felt like a master, like one who had conquered the seemingly unconquerable under the most adverse of circumstances, in a place where tobacco was one's only consolation.

But, not satisfied, I determined to make other conquests — I determined that I would stop eating meat. So I started living on bread, potatoes and beans. When the lady who had sent me the first book learned of this determination she wrote and tried to dissuade me. Although herself a vegetarian she was not a fanatic, and realized perfectly that a human system which has been nurtured on meat could not suddenly cease consuming it without having the proper substitutes — nuts, fresh

fruits, milk, eggs and a variety of vegetables. Exponents of other religions or beliefs would have rejoiced in a convert under such circumstances, but she objected. "Wait until you get out and can get proper food," she wrote, "it will injure your health where you are."

But I was stubborn, and, aside from my newly-born belief that vegetarianism was right — as indicated by the work done by the horse, reindeer, the elephant, the camel and the ox — I was determined to prove that I had the "will" to carry out my convictions.

After a few months on a meagre diet I decided to test my "will" still further, and made up my mind to fast for three days. I did so, and then felt that I was "strong"— that I was master of my body.

For four years I lived on bread, potatoes and beans, with an occasional dish of dried fruit, and then I suffered an attack of typhoid fever. After diagnosing my case the prison physician said to me: "eat as little of the strained soup and milk which we will give you as you possibly can; the less you take into your stomach, the better for you."

I believed he knew what he was talking about — he had the experience of thousands of doctors and millions of cases to bank on — so I decided to abstain from food. Notwithstanding this action on my part, the fever gradually mounted until it was close to 106 degrees and I was subjected to ice baths. To describe one's sensations with a temperature of 106 degrees is impossible, but the ice baths are still excruciatingly vivid. Each sop of the terrible sponge was like a knife-thrust through my intestines. I shall never forget the experience. Up to that time I had laughed at the word "nerves;" since that time I have regretted that I knew how to laugh.

It had been four years since I had eaten meat or

touched tobacco, but when I was convalescing I watched the man in the next bed — a consumptive — smoking cigarettes, and one night I asked him to let me have his sack of tobacco and papers. Propping myself on one elbow, I rolled a cigarette and lighted it. After a few "drags" I fell back on the pillow, dizzy but happy, with a sense of having caught a new hold on life. The next day I smoked twice, without a thought of the possible consequences. All that passed through my mind was that I'd console myself during the monotony of "getting strong" enough to walk, and afterwards resume my abstinence.

Alas, I have been smoking cigarettes ever since, though I am continually promising myself to "cut them out." But each time I have made the effort I have extenuated failure with the fallacy that I am nervous. When I was strong enough the doctor ordered "broth" for me, and I drank it. It was made from meat, but I didn't care, because it made me feel better.

When the day came for my discharge from the hospital, I left determined to resume my former abstinences, but I didn't. To this day I am using tobacco and eating meat; the former, excessively, the latter moderately.

With my "ideals" still in mind I left San Quentin full of determination to resume my former status, but, as already told, I ate a beefsteak on the boat coming over to San Francisco, and followed it with a cigarette. I came out filled with the highest of moral convictions and the firm determination to live up to them, but I failed, though the keen sense of failure which I felt, and which I still feel, may possibly mean ultimate victory.

CHAPTER VI

The second night I did not go to bed at all. I feared that I would miss something, that I had to live each moment of what we call Time in full possession of my senses. A number of men who have served long sentences in prison have told me they felt the same way; that they found it impossible to sleep during the first week following release because they revelled too much in hearing, seeing, tasting and "feeling."

Instead of retiring I walked the streets until long after midnight. Early in the evening I tried a theatre, but did not stay — it was too much like being shut in, like being in a crowd for which one brain was thinking. I wanted to see and think and feel for myself. When I squeezed my way to the aisle and walked the incline to the foyer it was with a sense of being out of harmony, and a number of persons regarded me in surprise bordering on disapprobation.

On the street I took several deep breaths and felt free. I inquired the way to the Mission, and started to walk out there. At San Quentin I had heard many men expatiate on the Mission. I had heard them talk of it reverently, as if it were a beloved place.

At the junction of Market and Valencia streets I noticed a hotel, the Valmar. The combination of the two street names into a name for the hotel was odd. I wondered why the idea had not been applied in other places.

In the Mission itself I found the people different from those on Market Street. The men seemed more manly

and the girls more womanly. Hundreds of couples were on the street, some of them with perambulators. All were dressed comfortably. Many of the men wore soft shirts and caps, while the girls and women were subtly attractive in uncovered hair. I have often wondered that women should mar their natural beauty with the expensive and useless creations called hats, and yet one so often sees a beautiful girl lingering before a milliner's window, unable to pass the place without admiring and longing for a freakish combination of wire, ribbons, velvet and feathers "marked down" to $27.50. At the risk of a "rise" from women I'm going to write something which I recently heard a prominent man, a close student of human nature, say.

He said: "The women are agitating for the abolition of saloons. Why don't the men agitate for a maximum price of $5 on women's hats? I believe that many women get as thoroughly intoxicated on hats and furbelows as men do on liquor. I believe that as many girls have fallen because of hats and gowns as men have fallen for tobacco and booze. Tobacco and booze are highly injurious, as well as unnecessary, but expensive hats and Parisian gowns are equally so."

In reply to a question he said: "Yes, I do think that women should look attractive, but so should men. Wnat is more satisfying than to see a clean, strong, vigorous man walking to work in the morning, whether he be a clerk or artisan, and what more inspiring than to see an equally clean and graceful girl or woman resplendent in simple dress and her natural beauty? We come into the world naked, and, strictly speaking, we leave it naked, but some of the absurdities we wear in the interval make ring-nosed and stained-teeth savages highly respectable."

At a soda counter on Valencia Street a girl and her

escort were imbibing through straws. She had on a red sweater, tan shoes and was without a hat. Her plenteous blonde hair looked like silk under the electric light, and her teeth were beautiful. He was immaculate in corduroy trousers, brown shirt, dark blue cravat and grey coat. Locks of black, curly hair enhanced his mauve crush hat, and his dark eyes were clear and firm. Splashes of plaster on his shoes indicated his vocation.

I couldn't avoid hearing their conversation.

"The dearest little flat," she said, "and you know that three-room set we picked out last week —?"

He nodded, complacently. "Well," she continued, her bosom heaving under the red sweater, "it will just fit. I've been picturing it all afternoon."

"Well, let's do it," he burst out. "I've been willing a long time, but you've held back; you've always wanted to be sure that we'd start all right. I've wanted you, and you've wanted furniture. If you can take me as part of the furniture I'm ready to be a chair, or a table, or anything."

He finished with a trace of petulance in his voice, and she placed her hand on his.

"Jack, dear!" she said.

They sat looking into each other's eyes, the soda half finished, and I reluctantly paid ten cents.

I glanced back from the doorway.

They were still looking at each other.

Back on Market Street I was attracted by the animals and birds in a store window. A young chicken was daintily pecking at grains of wheat, while rabbits and mice scampered about.

It was the first rabbit I had seen for ten years. Naturally, I was interested — no, not naturally, but abnormally interested.

On the other side of the doorway were monkeys. I stood and watched them until the store lights were turned out by a policeman.

What business had a policeman turning out lights? The self-question interested me, and I followed him. I saw him try doors and switch off lights in several places, though the switch, in each instance, was concealed where I couldn't see it.

At last it dawned on me that the storekeepers wished to keep their wares displayed so long as there were people on the streets, and that the policeman turned off the lights from the outside at a certain hour, thus permitting the various proprietors to enjoy the evenings in the knowledge that electricity was working for them, and that the policeman on the beat would see that it wasn't wasted.

I wondered if the policeman were paid for the service.

A few minutes later as I passed the bird and animal store again, I noted that the chicken was asleep and the rabbits had disappeared, evidently having ensconced themselves for the night. The sleeping chicken made me think of a story I had heard Smoky tell about Alaska. It was to the effect that the first chickens taken up there died of starvation because daylight did not come, remaining on their perches waiting for dawn until they fell from the effects of exhaustion. It was only by supplying artificial light for them during twelve hours out of each twenty-four in the long winter darkness that they could be kept alive.

The chicken in the store window had only five hours' sleep coming. It was August, and day would break early. I wondered how long the bird would survive under such unnatural conditions. The speculation started a line of thought. Was it not true that a cat, in its natural state, does not torture its prey? Did it not follow that asso-

ciation with man — so called domestication — makes animals and birds unnatural? The house cat, having its meals supplied to it, works off its suppressed energy — energy which in a state of nature it would expend in hunting food — by torturing the mouse which it catches. Was not the same thing true of human beings — was not suppression an evil?

Of course, I realized that those who violate the laws of society into which they happen to be born — whether in Thibet or California — must be restrained, but would not restraint with the minimum of suppression be better? I thought it would, and I think so still.

The man whose natural energies have been suppressed will "play" with the mouse.

No, this is not a preachment. I'm merely trying to make you feel what I felt that second night, because since that second night I have "played" with mice, and every ex-prisoner I have contacted, without exception, has "played" with mice. Long years from a man's or woman's life, years in a cell, years of abnormal suppression, with the right to exercise choice eliminated, inevitably weakens the man or woman. And then when the right of choosing is thrust suddenly upon the weakened man or woman the liberty is too terrific. That is the reason why 40 per cent. of discharged prisoners go back to prison. A dog, after being chained up, is no plaything for man, woman or child; nor is a horse which has been kept in a box stall all winter a safe animal for a pleasure drive.

All this, and a good deal more, came into my mind as I walked down Market Street to my hotel.

In the lobby I wrote some letters, and at 3 A. M. I went upstairs to my room.

I had been out of prison nearly two days.

It seemed like two years.

CHAPTER VII

THE next morning when I visited the editorial rooms the big man informed me that he had decided that I should write my prison experience as a serial for the paper. I acquiesced readily, but with the proviso that a nom-de-plume be used. At the suggestion he half closed his eyes, and did not immediately reply. Then, with emphatic decision, he said:

"No, that will not do. This has got to be a real human document. It will have to be done under your own name."

"But I'm just out of prison," I objected; "I don't want to put myself in prison for life — I want to be like other men, I want to be free. Besides, I have a mother and sister to consider. My imprisonment has been kept secret where I am known — where I went to school — and they are sensitive."

"The objection concerning your mother and sister is good," he responded; "I can understand that; but what do you mean by 'putting yourself in prison for life'?"

"Why, I'll have to stand before the whole world as an ex-convict, won't I?" I asked. "And you know how ex-convicts are regarded."

He threw away his cigar and felt in his pocket for another one.

"I think you're wrong," he replied slowly. "The old spirit of life-long condemnation is dying out. A change is coming over people. And besides," he added quickly, "it's within your power to accelerate that change. From

what you've already told me I know you can do it, and you must."

A special writer for the paper, who was present, interrupted the colloquy. He has since been a good friend and advisor.

"I think you ought to do it, Lowrie," he said. "It may mean a whole lot."

The matter was discussed for an hour, but I remained obdurate. I was obsessed with the idea of regaining my place in the world surreptitiously. I didn't want to be known as an ex-convict — and I didn't want to bring humiliation to my relatives. At the same time the arguments had impressed me. I did not have much faith in my ability to write the proposed story, yet felt the waste and injustice of "the system" so keenly that I yearned to try to picture it for others.

Finally I said I would think it over, and the special writer accompanied me to the street, where he suggested that we "take a walk."

The noise on Market Street distressed me, and besides, my eyes pained. They were so unused to seeing rapidly moving vehicles, and so many strange faces.

"Let's get on a quiet street," I suggested.

"Good," he replied, and led the way toward the northern waterfront.

On Washington Street — I think it was Washington, I'm not sure — we noticed an old lady with a huge bundle, trying to board a car. My companion rushed out to assist her, but the conductor "beat him to it." He hopped off the car, placed the bundle aboard, and then helped the old lady get on. I thought I heard him use the word "mother."

The incident impressed me deeply, and ever since I have consciously observed street car conductors — also

motormen. Any one who thinks motormen and conductors have an easy time is away off. Motormen have to be on the alert continuously with ears, eyes and hands. Watch one, and see for yourself. The conductor has to be on the alert also, but with voice and memory thrown in. The other day I boarded a crowded outbound municipal car. A lady got on at Grant Avenue, along with half a dozen other passengers.

"Please let me off at Ninth Avenue," she said to the conductor before disappearing in the jam of swaying humanity. I was bound for Larkin Street, but remained on the car out of curiosity.

At least 100 persons got on and off before the car reached Ninth Avenue, the conductor, a small man with a straight mouth and nervous hands, meanwhile issuing transfers, answering questions, making change and ringing up fares.

Before Ninth Avenue was reached the crowd had thinned out and I looked for the lady who had made the request. She was seated in the middle section of the car — I recognized her by the purple hat she wore. The conductor must have noted the hat also, for at Eighth Avenue he stepped forward, tapped her on the shoulder and said something.

She got off at the next corner, without even a "thank you."

Yesterday I tried the same "stunt" myself. I got on a Sutter car at Kearney Street and asked the conductor to let me off at "Pierce."

I took a seat near the rear, and waited.

As we pulled out from Fillmore Street the conductor shouted "Pierce next."

I got off.

He had not come forward to tap me on the shoulder,

and I didn't blame him. Besides I was not a woman under a purple hat.

But I thanked him, and apologized to the purple lady for writing it.

. . . . . .

My friend and I continued our walk. When we arrived at the waterfront he led the way out onto one of the docks, and we sat down with our feet dangling over the water.

While we were sitting there, talking, a tug came in, and we were obliged to pull up our legs.

"I love the water and I love the men who follow it," he remarked as a deckhand on the tug — a man with a stubby moustache and blue flannel shirt — threw a line to a man on the dock.

We watched the boat as it was made fast, and then got up.

My companion stopped to have a chat with the blue-shirted man, while I lighted and smoked a cigarette.

"I think you'd better write your story under your own name," were the words I heard as we parted after dinner together at his apartment, where two other bachelors lived.

The afternoon and evening had passed as a moment.

Back at the hotel I began to think that perhaps time wouldn't seem so long "outside" if I had friends with whom to spend it.

I went to bed, and to sleep, at 10 P. M.

The next day I started "My Life in Prison." I was given a bunch of copy paper and a pencil, and placed at a desk in an unused room, with instructions to send the first chapter to the managing editor as soon as it was finished. I was also told to make the chapters about 1500 words each.

I don't know how long it took me, but it seemed only a few minutes elapsed before I had the chapter ready. I immediately started on the second installment, but was soon interrupted by a boy who said the managing editor wished to see me.

He had the manuscript on his desk and had just finished reading it aloud to the city editor and two or three others of the staff. I sensed that I was being regarded with professional interest.

"Your stuff is good; it's very good," said the big man, "but we think you ought to begin the story by telling what you did to get into the penitentiary. This begins on your way over and leaves us all wondering how you came to be in handcuffs with a fifteen-year sentence. This chapter will fit in later on, just as it is, but begin with the story of your crime."

From a journalistic standpoint he was right, but I didn't relish the thought of picturing myself in the rôle of burglar. I decided to do it, however, and went back to the little room, where I worked all day. I got intensely interested, and couldn't drive the pencil fast enough. There was a typewriter on the desk, but it was of a make with which I was unfamiliar.

By three o'clock that afternoon I had completed five chapters, and they passed the editor with but slight changes.

Before leaving his office for the day the big man called me in to see him.

"You can write," he said, briefly. He then stated what my "salary to start" would be, and told me to report in the morning.

CHAPTER VIII

One of the more vivid impressions of my first week "outside" I experienced at the office the next morning. I was busy writing in the little room when the door opened and the big man walked in.

"Can you spare a few minutes?" he asked, "I want to introduce you to the boys."

Of course, in passing in and out of the "local" room I had noticed "the boys"— some of them girls — pounding at typewriters, their faces tensely concentrated, and I had wondered how and when I should get acquainted with all of them. One girl had spoken to me the day before when a small Italian boy had tried to sell me peanuts in the hall. She bought a bag and offered me some. She was the second woman to whom I had spoken since my release, the first being the wife of the big man at the hotel dinner a few hours after the beginning of my freedom. It seemed strange to talk to a woman and I was very self-conscious in the presence of one.

I followed my guide from desk to desk, and was in turn introduced to each writer. The form of introduction was: "Mr. A—— or Miss B——, this is Mr. Lowrie, just out of San Quentin; he's going to work for the paper."

It was like burning bridges, and I was conscious of embarrassment. I felt sure that some one of "the boys" would shrink at the words, "just out of San Quentin." But each hand clasp was strong and sincere, and when the last desk was passed I found myself wondering. I had always imagined that an ex-convict was an undesirable

acquaintance for most persons, and I had been met with real warmth. Since that time I have established beyond doubt that the warmth was intrinsic because "the boys" working for that paper catch the spirit of its editors, and learn the truth that life and work are only worth while to those who see and feel that the evolution of humanity is more vital than selfishness. I have seen writers come to work for that paper, and have watched them change from cynics to optimists. It is merely an exemplification of the old fact that the esprit-de-corps of any aggregation reflects the leaders.

We passed from the "local" to the "copy" room, and thence to the composing department, where I was introduced to the "make-up man," and the proof readers. Most of the linotypers were too busy to be interrupted, but I learned to know them all by name later on and from them, without exception, have always been treated as an ordinary human being.

Down in the basement where the pressmen and wrappers work, I got the same kind of reception.

The big Hoe presses interested me. The nearest I had ever been to one was gazing through the plate-glass windows at Herald Square in New York years before.

In the business office and the circulation department the same spirit prevailed. The farther we went, the more self-confidence I absorbed, the more courage I felt that I could "make good," even with everybody cognizant of the fact that I was "just out of San Quentin."

The experience was an excellent one; it served to change me considerably.

That afternoon, at the invitation of a friend who had worked with me in the warden's office at San Quentin, I left the hotel and "moved" to Berkeley. The moving

consisted in rewrapping the change of underwear which I had purchased. I had no trunk or suitcase or umbrella to bother with. It was a good deal like the "moving" of a hobo.

My friend, who was also on parole, had been sent to San Quentin with a sentence of three years for forgery. He had been out two months and had sent for his wife and three children to come from a Southern State. I found them living in a delightful little cottage, with grass-plot in front and a big yard in the rear. She was a dark and matronly-looking young woman, and made me feel at home immediately. I was installed in the front room — the parlor — with a Davenport for sleeping.

Meeting the three children, aged nine, seven and five respectively, was a real ordeal. I didn't know how to act, nor what to say; I hadn't spoken to a child for so long. I remember that I felt a sense of being tested, for I recalled the old saying: "Leave it to a child or a dog to tell what a man really is." I knew I was absolutely safe with the "intuition" of dogs, because no dog had ever "turned me down," but with three pairs of pretty young eyes regarding me speculatively I felt dubious.

"This is Helen," said the mother, leading the eldest girl forward. She extended a hand shyly, and I felt relieved as I took it. "And this is Claude," I was informed as the boy was pushed toward me.

He regarded me suspiciously, and I began to think of escape. "Why don't you shake hands?" asked the mother. "Shake hands with the gentleman."

"No, I don't wanter," he announced, drawing back.

I felt myself trembling. I felt condemned as "no good."

"I'm not going to eat you, Claude," I said seriously. "To-morrow we'll play baseball together." (I had noticed him playing baseball in a vacant lot, along with some other boys, as I had approached the house.)

"Will you?" he queried, doubtfully.

"Surely I will," I responded, extending my hand.

He took it gingerly, his grey eyes searching mine.

"And this is Frances," was the next announcement.

Like a young hound released from the leash, the youngest member of the family sprang at me, jumped up and down, and motioned to be picked up. Dazedly I complied — and she kissed me.

I shall never forget that instant so long as I live; the act was so spontaneous, so genuine, so intense. As I set her down I noted that she looked like her mother, and felt grateful. I had been tested, and had won.

Later I became very friendly with all three children, they used to watch for me and run to meet me when I came back from the city in the afternoon. Later in the day they invariably repeated the performance for their father. It was a beautiful family. It seemed impossible that the father should or could fail to realize his fortune.

Little Frances and I became very much attached. One of our popular games was for her to stand on the veranda steps and jump down into my arms, she insisting that I stand farther and farther away so as to make the leap more hazardous.

The second day after I had moved to Berkeley my typewriter arrived from San Quentin, and I began to get out my work at home, and more expeditiously. A former warden had granted me the privilege of purchasing a typewriter, and I had been the only prisoner who had one. At night, when I got through with my work in the warden's office, I would go inside and write stories.

The wife of my friend was an excellent cook, and revelled in demonstrating her ability, so I decided to board with them indefinitely. I also agreed to go into partnership with my friend as public stenographers, and we rented and fitted out an office in San Francisco. Up to that time, since his release, he had been ekeing an existence by substituting for various court reporters, but felt that he could do better if he had an office of his own. My daily installment for the paper required only two hours or so of my time, and I thought I saw a chance to get ahead financially, as well as to keep busy.

The venture proved a failure, and after three months we were obliged to give it up, but not before we were both "placed on the carpet" by the parole officer for "going into business" for ourselves without the permission of the State Board of Prison Directors. One of the rules governing parole prisoners is that they may not "go into business" without specific permission.

In our case the Board did not order us to discontinue, but did inform us that we had violated the conditions of parole, and admonished us not to repeat the offence.

My friend had one habit which, at that time, I disapproved. He drank wine with his meals at home, and even permitted the children to have a little. He repeatedly offered me a glass, but I always refused. I had no desire for it, and it was a violation of parole. At the time I had not the slightest idea that I should ever indulge intoxicants, but — I must not get ahead of my story.

Some time subsequently, after my friend and I had dissolved our business partnership and given up our office, he succeeded in getting a place as substitute reporter in one of the courts.

One day the Lieutenant of the yard at San Quentin (since discharged for pilfering) brought a prisoner from

the penitentiary to testify in a case, and while in the court room noticed the stenographer and recognized him as a former inmate of the prison. So soon as he could do so he approached one of the court officials and divulged the identity of the reporter.

"Why, we know that," was the response. "We know he's been at San Quentin. But he's doing all right, he's giving satisfaction, and he's got a family to support. What would you have us do, discharge him?"

This was said sarcastically, in an effort to show the prison officer how inconsistent his attitude was. Personally, I had heard this same man condemn prisoners who returned after being discharged, and yet he was doing his best to "knock" a paroled prisoner out of a job, and thus send him down the toboggan.

Many cases of this nature have since come to my notice, and I shall recount some of them. Generally such an act on the part of a prison official is done with the idea that it is his duty to protect the employer — not primarily to hurt the ex-prisoner. But the injury to the ex-prisoner is frequently the same — no matter what the informer's motive may be.

CHAPTER IX

The first Sunday following my release I was invited to be one of an auto party, and we motored out through the Park to the beach and thence by way of the Sloat Boulevard to San José. The ride was exhilarating, but impressions crowded upon me so rapidly that I found it impossible to note everything. Passing over the same road a week later I saw many places and scenes which I had failed to see the preceding Sunday. With the passing of each day and the multiplying of experiences I realized more and more how much out of touch with life I had become. I found myself continually interested in things that other persons didn't seem to notice. That is still the case with me; for which I am, in a large degree, indebted to the suppression of the years. A blind person suddenly restored to sight or a deaf person suddenly made to hear will use eyes or ears, as the case may be, with a much greater degree of consciousness than would ever have been the case had they never been afflicted. To a man coming out of the dungeon at San Quentin the chirping of sparrows is melody and the sight of the prison walls and buildings a rapture. To the man coming out of the prison itself the multisonous and tumultuous city is a million melodies and raptures. He is a Rip Van Winkle or a Robinson Crusoe.

On August 11, ten days after I left the stone walls, the first chapter of "My Life in Prison" appeared in *The Bulletin*. During the previous afternoon I had been accosted by the staff photographer and informed that he

wanted to "take" me, as "they" were "going to run a picture of me with the story." My first impulse was to rebel. It was enough that my name was to be used. If a picture were published I would be pointed out on the streets, and could go nowhere without the feeling that people would recognize me. But on second thought I decided not to object; what would be the use? I had been argued down, flattened, squelched by the staff in the first instance. Why give them a second inning?

So the picture was taken, and it appeared in the paper the next day. To my great relief, it did not look much like me. In fact, during the weeks that followed I talked with scores of persons on the ferry boats to and from the Key Route mole. Many of these persons talked to me about "My Life in Prison" without the least inkling that I was the writer, and I did not let them know. It was very gratifying to hear the opinions. The principal comment was: "Oh, there isn't any such person; no ex-convict could write like that. Some *Bulletin* writer is doing it."

One day a little man in bowed spectacles, who was seated next to me on the boat, folded up his *Bulletin* with the remark: "I think this fellow Lowrie's a fake."

He said it as if it was certain that I knew about Lowrie.

"Who's Lowrie?" I asked.

"Why, ain't you reading *The Bulletin* story?" he queried, in surprise, reopening the paper. "Lowrie's an ex-convict, and he's writing about his life in prison. It's good reading all right, but I don't think he's sincere; I never saw an ex-con yet that was any good. They —"

"Why, it seems to me I have heard of this Lowrie," I interposed. "I heard some one say that he isn't writing the story, that he is a myth, that some reporter is writing it."

"Nothing to that," he replied, quickly. "I saw Lowrie the other day. I—"

I was laughing outright and he stopped.

"Pardon me," I apologized, "I was thinking of something funny."

"Yes, a friend of mine who knows him well pointed him out to me on the street," he continued.

"Does he look anything like that picture?" I asked, calmly pointing at the face at the top of the column.

It was a nervy thing for me to do — the little man looked to be sharp-eyed, and I noted that his ears were not only large, but protruded.

"I should say not," he responded. "That picture flatters him. He looks like a thug."

I couldn't help but wonder who the unknown gentleman was who had been pointed out as me.

At any rate, the little man and I got into quite an argument, I, of course, defending Lowrie. In my zest to make a case for Lowrie I forgot that I at first had asked who he was, and now suddenly found myself discussing the man as if I'd known him all my life. Strange to say, the little man didn't note the inconsistency. Perhaps he wasn't as sharp as he looked.

On several other occasions I discussed Donald Lowrie, and in one instance "knocked" him because I wanted to hear the other man sing Lowrie's praises in a still higher key. I could be certain that they were sincere.

Presently the editors of *The Bulletin* began to receive letters expressing doubt as to the existence of Donald Lowrie. No higher tribute to my cause could possibly have been paid. I did not take it as a personal tribute, because I felt, and still feel, that no human being should take credit for expressing thought. Thought is universal, and we are all merely vehicles of interpretation. Some

express thought well in speaking, some in writing, some in acting, some in laying bricks or digging trenches. All are equally valuable and important. But many of the letters stated that an ex-convict couldn't write that way, and this bore out my belief that numbers of persons were living under the delusion that convicts and ex-convicts are inherently different from other persons, and that they cannot manifest intelligently. I began to realize the wisdom of having had the story written under my own name, because I began to see the possibilities — the opportunity to awaken people's interest and perhaps change, or at least modify, their convictions or prejudices, as well as dispel apathy.

There were so many of these doubting letters that the management of *The Bulletin* decided to have me "interviewed," by one of the women staff writers. Pauline Jacobson was assigned to the task and took me out to the Japanese tea garden in Golden Gate Park. While we drank tea she chatted about the birds and the shrubs and various other things, until I wondered when the "interview" was to begin. I have since learned that an interview with Miss Jacobson has begun before you get close enough to see the color of her eyes.

After drinking the tea we strolled through the park and she asked a lot of questions, many of them disconcerting.

On return to the office we visited the managing editor, and Miss Jacobson, discussing me, calmly remarked: "Oh, yes, I think I've got a pretty good story, but Mr. Lowrie isn't sincere."

To say that I was surprised is a mild way of putting it. I was astounded, and hurt.

"What makes you say that?"

"That's my opinion," she replied. "I may be wrong, and hope I am."

I was not satisfied and wanted to discuss the matter further, but the editor changed the subject.

That night I walked the streets in Berkeley, and did a lot of thinking, trying to analyze myself. I could only arrive at one conclusion — that Miss Jacobson was wrong. I have since come to realize, however, that she helped me immensely by making me think about the matter, and I remember that I determined before going to bed that night that I would strive to be as nearly truthful with every one as it is possible for a man to be.

On August 19, eight days after the story began, Miss Jacobson's article appeared in *The Bulletin* under the caption, "The Problem Donald Lowrie Presents." I was glad to see that she made no charge of insincerity. A few days later I received an intimation that the prison authorities contemplated a revocation of my parole on the ground that it was not proper for an ex-prisoner, especially a paroled prisoner, to criticise the prison system. I had anticipated the possibility of such a contingency, but had said nothing about it to any one. When I heard this rumor, however, I interviewed the managing editor, and asked him how far I would be protected.

"Stick to the truth, to the facts," he said, "and we will stick to you. The time has passed when a person can be suppressed for telling the truth."

I heard nothing further of the rumor at that time, but a few weeks later a plan to return me to San Quentin, merely because certain facts I had written had adversely criticised the acts of certain prison officials, was frustrated only because of the indirect intervention of a high State official.

CHAPTER X

THERE were some cold, foggy days during the middle of August, and several times I found myself shivering. At San Quentin the prisoners at that time wore canton-flannel underwear all the year, and the striped outer garments were of heavy cassimere. During the last three years I spent there I had worked in the warden's office and was not out doors very much. The change from the heavy prison garments to the light clothing of civilization proved too sudden for comfort. One afternoon while out in an automobile with the managing editor to visit some of his literary friends, who had expressed a desire to see me, I became so cold that it was apparent.

"Why don't you get an overcoat?" he asked.

"I'm going to," I replied.

"But you need it now," he said. "When we get back in town you get one this afternoon; you're uncomfortable, I can see that."

The fact was I didn't have sufficient money to buy an overcoat. I had paid a month's board in advance, installed a telephone where I lived, and had invested in a suit of clothes and the many other articles of apparel a man is supposed to need. I had decided to wait for my second week's salary before getting an overcoat. I wanted to tell him I didn't have the money for the proposed purchase, but felt embarrassed about doing so. I promised myself that on arriving back in town I'd evade the matter somehow. But when we got back he drove straight to a large clothing establishment on Market Street and said: "Here we are."

After getting out of the car I hesitated, undecided what to say or do.

"I don't suppose you've got the money," he remarked carelessly, "but that's all right, you can pay me back."

I objected to the plan, but he led the way inside, where I was soon fitted. It was my first overcoat in ten years.

As I passed out of the store I felt more comfortable, but thought of the hundreds of ex-prisoners not so fortunate. Many of them undoubtedly needed an overcoat more than I did. Only that morning I had met a little consumptive ex-prisoner on the street. He had been paroled from San Quentin a month before because he was hopelessly tubercular. He had shivered as he talked with me, telling me how hard his mother and sister had worked — the mother as charwoman, the sister in a department store — during the nine years he had been in prison.

"And I can't get work. I'm too weak," he had added, forlornly.

I recalled the case and the circumstances of the parole. The prison directors had refused to let the man go on parole until assured that a home would be provided and that he would be cared for. This the mother and sister had promised to do. Subsequently, during the operation of the prisoners' aid bureau I learned more of this case. The sister had finally gone to a "house of bondage" so that her brother might have the medicines and food prescribed by the physician for the dying weeks, while the mother was incapacitated from work because of rheumatism consequent upon years of floor scrubbing on dampened knees. Many a working unit, sent to prison, where he gets nothing for his labor and can contribute nothing toward the support of those who have depended on him, has been the cause of a sister, or even a wife, descending into the wolf's jaws in trying to keep the wolf away.

To condemn a man or woman already in hell, without knowing the cause which jammed them there, is a monstrous thing. To condemn such a man or woman, after you learn the causes, is — more monstrous. It may be right to condemn what an individual does, but never the individual.

That night when I got home my new coat was an object of comment on the part of the family. My friend, the father, had not been able to get an overcoat; he had been too busy establishing his family and in feeding the young mouths. As he felt the texture of the garment, I recalled the first time I had spoken to him. It had been in the warden's office at San Quentin. He had been assigned to the office from the jute mill the day before. It was after lock-up and the force was working late. The lights were on, and it was raining hard outside. I had occasion to go into the stenographers' room for a document, and there was this man, seated at his desk, his hands in his lap, and tears trickling down his face. He didn't seem to note my presence, and I backed out of the room, wondering. My thought was that he was weeping because he was in prison, and that, of course, was unpleasing. A prisoner is supposed to weep in his cell. But the next day I learned the truth. When I had burst into his office the evening before he had just finished reading a letter from his wife announcing the death of their youngest child, and the other three gravely afflicted and liable to die also. But the other three didn't die, and here I was in that very man's home, or rather in the new home which he had established many hundreds of miles from the scene of his former residence. Had the provisions of parole permitted, he would have gone back to the old home, but as he was barred from leaving California he had been obliged to send for the family to come

to him. This could be done only by borrowing considerable money, which fact, in time, was contributory to the father's undoing and a miserable tragedy. It is not yet time to tell it, however.

The wife, of course, knew where he had been, but the children did not, and we had to be very careful whenever we discussed San Quentin not to give the young ones a clew. Little Frances was especially bright and one night at dinner she asked her father where the place was that we were always talking about. He and I agreed at least a dozen times to forget the past, and talk of something else, but I was writing "My Life in Prison" at the time, a chapter each day, and it was on my mind day and night. Besides, I have since noted that two or more ex-prisoners cannot be thrown together for any length of time, no matter how long they have been free, without repeatedly reverting to incidents and happenings behind the bars.

Almost from the first installment of the story I began to receive letters, and, as the days passed, the number increased with each mail. At first I didn't think of answering them, but it occurred to me that any person who would take the time and trouble to write a letter of commendation, or of friendly advice, with an occasional letter of condemnation, was entitled to a reply, so I began to systematically answer all of them. Quite a number of persons wrote a second or third letter, and some of the resultant correspondences went a long way in shaping my life at the time, while in some cases the acquaintance or friendship still exists. As intimated, these letters were of all kinds, many of them from women, church women, professional women, working women, women of the underworld and others.

One girl wrote that she was about to commit suicide and that she felt I would understand the misery that had

driven her to do it. I showed the letter to a friend and asked what I could do. I thought perhaps a notice in the paper might save her — the letter being unsigned — but he discouraged the idea. Letters from men were interesting. Nearly every vocation spoke. Several different writers had schemes for making money, or wanted to borrow money. A number of persons sent manuscripts, many of them bulky, with the request that I read them and pass judgment. These I returned with the advice that I was a tyro. One woman sent me a pair of antique handcuffs, which I have yet. She said that her great-great-grandfather had been a "peace officer in the old country," and that the handcuffs had come down from generation to generation as a curiosity. She thought they would interest me. They did. The operation of locking and unlocking them was complicated, but effective. I have often looked at them and wondered if any human being who wore them was hanged, for, during the days of their use, hanging was a public pastime, and victims had to be supplied to satisfy the mob's lust for blood. To-day hanging is a private horror. I wonder what it will be when twentieth century handcuffs are antique.

CHAPTER XI

One night late in August a friend who resided only a few blocks from where I lived in Berkeley invited me to partake of dinner at his home. He was the Oakland correspondent for *The Bulletin* and I had met him several times and liked him. At the house I met his father and sisters; also a girl "out on probation," to whom they had given a home. She was a pretty little thing of 17, and, if I remember rightly, had stolen a horse — a rather unusual offence for a girl.

I shall never forget that evening, because not a word was uttered about prisons or prisoners. I had accepted a number of dinner invitations, invitations extended to me by various persons, and in every instance the conversation had sooner or later drifted to the subject of my work. It was quite natural that I wanted some moments when I could forget it — it was too much like being in the prison itself to be thinking of it all the time, but wherever I went and whoever I met, that subject would come up. I was plied with questions of all kinds, and was expected to talk about prison almost exclusively. It was not long before I began to decline dinner invitations, although I realized that in so doing many persons thought me ungracious, if not unappreciative. The time finally came when the desire to be alone for a few hours each day developed into a craving. During the two years which have since elapsed the desire to be alone has grown on me until some of my friends have concluded that I am self-centered and adverse to the social amenities of life. To a great

extent this is true, though, by "alone" I mean alone in the crowd — not tied down to any "set."

But that night in Berkeley was one of the few occasions when the conversation was general, and I enjoyed the evening.

After dinner we went out on the veranda. The moon was up over the Berkeley hills, and Omar Khayyam's lines anent "yon rising moon" came into my mind.

"Have you visited the University yet?" my friend inquired.

"No, not yet, but I'm going to do so," I answered, "especially the Greek Theatre. I've seen pictures of it and was just wondering how it would look by moonlight."

"Well, let's walk over there," he suggested. "It's not far."

The young "horse thief" asked if she might go along, to which request he readily acceded.

Arrived at our destination we found the doors securely locked and a high board fence flanking the entrances. I voiced my disappointment, and my friend suggested that I climb the fence.

"We've both seen the theatre before," he said, "and if you can get over the fence we'll be glad to wait for you."

I determined to try to get inside, so we went up an inclined place to a point where the top of the fence was nearer to being within reach. He assisted me to a position where I could get hold of the top, and a few seconds later I was inside, though not without mishap, for a barbed-wire along the top had torn a rent in a new suit of clothes.

The scene before me proved to be well worth the effort I had made, however, and I felt satisfied. At a place near the top of the amphitheatre I stood and gazed at the ghost-like stage and rostrums below. The night was very

still and the moon just right. There was scarcely a shadow anywhere. It was natural to think of old Athens, and I found myself musing on the changes humanity had suffered and enjoyed since those days.

While I was still ruminating I heard my companions calling to me from the other side of the fence. Their voices seemed far away and uncanny.

Getting out was much easier than getting in, and I was soon with them again. We walked down under the stately trees to the university buildings, where we parted. I have twice since been on the university grounds; once with my mother and again with a graduate. The latter knew the place thoroughly and told me many interesting things. It was night, and I noted that one of the class buildings was brilliantly lighted in the upper stories.

"Those are the engineers," my companion informed me. "They have to grind all the time."

One of the immediate results of the publication of "My Life in Prison" was that ex-prisoners who were unable to get work, or who were broke and hungry, began coming to *The Bulletin* office for assistance. From the editor down to the office boys, including the women writers, every person in the editorial department of the paper helped one or more of these distressed men. I have had persons tell me that men who have never been in prison should be helped first, but it happened that I was familiar with the peculiar needs and handicaps of ex-prisoners; also that the paper had taken up that cause. It was, therefore, quite natural that help should have been given to those who were aware of the new policy and applied for aid. Before long, however, the demands became greater than could be filled by the same persons over and over, most of whom were working for salaries and had their own personal expenses and responsibilities. Of course, many men

who were assisted told others, and the ones thus told came to the office in the expectation that they would not be refused. It was impossible to deny them.

Finally the demands reached such proportions that it was decided to appeal to the public for subscriptions and to organize the work. Beginning September 19 a notice was printed in *The Bulletin* each day offering to publish "employment wanted" advertisements free for indigent or destitute persons. This offer was not limited to ex-prisoners, but included everyone. A few days later announcement was made that a bureau was to be established for the purpose of assisting penniless ex-prisoners, and subscriptions were solicited. The response was generous and immediate, and the Mutual Aid and Employment Bureau was established, with a board of directors and a salaried secretary-treasurer. It was decided not to have a "soup-kitchen" or "lodging house," but to loan to each applicant according to his needs, and permit him to use the money himself, without restriction, the understanding being that he should refund it so soon as he was able to do so, in order that one other person might be helped.

The bureau was established in one of the large down-town office buildings, and most of the men who applied at *The Bulletin* thereafter were referred to the new organization. This relieved the situation at the office and a great deal of good was done. A number of prominent men and women, including some of the executives of *The Bulletin*, not only extended momentary assistance, but also offered to give employment to one or more applicants. With few exceptions the men thus placed "made good," and a number are still holding the positions thus secured for them. I shall have more to say about the workings of the aid bureau later on.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, correspondence and responsibilities were becoming heavier each day, and among other things I received a number of invitations to speak in public. Save two or three brief announcements made to the prisoner audiences on the several occasions when I had been manager of the semi-annual entertainment at San Quentin, I had never spoken in public. I realized the possibility of augmenting interest in the improvement of prison conditions residual in public addresses, but shrank from appearing, and also lacked confidence. Besides, as the managing editor pointed out to me when the manager of a nickelodeon approached me with the munificent offer of $50 if I would appear at each performance and "say just a few words" to the patrons of his place of amusement for one week, I would only reach a few hundred persons, while in writing I reached many thousands daily. So I declined all these offers and put in what spare time I had in writing short stories, principally about prison life.

One Saturday near the end of August I accompanied the big man and his wife on an automobile trip to the insane asylum at Napa. Little Frances was with us also, and we had to stop and buy her a veil before leaving the city. It was a pink veil, and she was delighted with it.

After crossing on the ferry to Sausalito we drove through the beautiful Marin hills on the way north. It was a glorious day and the thought of a prison was far from my mind. But on arriving at the crest of the first range of hills a view of the marshes and swamps burst suddenly upon us, and there, across the water, secure on its brown promontory, stood the walls and cell houses and gatling-gun towers of San Quentin. A sense of impotency swept over me, and I wondered if the time would ever come when those walls would be razed, and the offender

against society treated in a sane corrective manner instead of like a wild animal. It seemed almost hopeless, for I remembered that the criminal offenders shipped to Australia by the English government, where they were given land and permitted to live normal lives with their families, had, after improving the opportunity thus presented to them to live normally under God's sun, in time themselves built jails and prisons and gibbets, and organized exactly the same kind of society from which they had escaped. I also recalled a prisoner at San Quentin, a man who had been a " crook " all his life and had served several terms, demanding punishment for another prisoner who had stolen his tobacco.

23 oct. 1921

CHAPTER XII

DESCENDING to the lowlands the prison was hidden from view by trees and intervening hills, but while traversing the road over the marshes I was forcibly reminded of it again when we came upon a gang of prisoners engaged in repairing the highway. The work they were doing, of course, made it impossible for them to keep their stripes clean and they looked very dirty and bedraggled. Never before, not even while in stripes myself, had I so poignantly realized the significance of the word convict. The gang was guarded by two men with rifles, one of whom was on horseback.

We were obliged to slow down while passing over the place where they were working, and as we went by they lined up on either side of the road and looked at us. Although I knew several of the men personally I made no sign of recognition. I felt that to do so might appear patronizing; they were in the depths, while I was in an automobile and wearing an overcoat. Could I have stopped and spoken I should have felt at ease, but it is against the rules for a prisoner to talk with a "free" person, and, technically, I was in that category. One of the guards recognized me as we passed and nodded almost imperceptibly. As we drove on my companion asked me if I knew any of the prisoners, and when I answered yes, he said:

"Why didn't you speak to them?"

"I couldn't," was all the reply I made.

At the asylum we had a long talk with our mutual

friend, or, to be nearer the truth, I should say my friend, for he and I had spent many years together in a cell at San Quentin, where he had devoted all his spare time to the writing of verse, much of which found its way into the magazines, and has since been published in a volume, with the title, "Drops of Blood."

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against society treated in a sane corrective manner instead of like a wild animal. It seemed almost hopeless, for I remembered that the criminal offenders shipped to Australia by the English government, where they were given land and permitted to live normal lives with their families, had, after improving the opportunity thus presented to them to live normally under God's sun, in time themselves built jails and prisons and gibbets, and organized exactly the same kind of society from which they had escaped. I also recalled a prisoner at San Quentin, a man who had been a " crook " all his life and had served several terms, demanding punishment for another prisoner who had stolen his tobacco.

83 oct. 1921

CHAPTER XII

DESCENDING to the lowlands the prison was hidden from view by trees and intervening hills, but while traversing the road over the marshes I was forcibly reminded of it again when we came upon a gang of prisoners engaged in repairing the highway. The work they were doing, of course, made it impossible for them to keep their stripes clean and they looked very dirty and bedraggled. Never before, not even while in stripes myself, had I so poignantly realized the significance of the word convict. The gang was guarded by two men with rifles, one of whom was on horseback.

We were obliged to slow down while passing over the place where they were working, and as we went by they lined up on either side of the road and looked at us. Although I knew several of the men personally I made no sign of recognition. I felt that to do so might appear patronizing; they were in the depths, while I was in an automobile and wearing an overcoat. Could I have stopped and spoken I should have felt at ease, but it is against the rules for a prisoner to talk with a "free" person, and, technically, I was in that category. One of the guards recognized me as we passed and nodded almost imperceptibly. As we drove on my companion asked me if I knew any of the prisoners, and when I answered yes, he said:

"Why didn't you speak to them?"

"I couldn't," was all the reply I made.

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friend, or, to be nearer the truth, I should say my friend, for he and I had spent many years together in a cell at San Quentin, where he had devoted all his spare time to the writing of verse, much of which found its way into the magazines, and has since been published in a volume, with the title, "Drops of Blood."

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"What do you mean?" I asked, "I haven't been out

of the county — oh, yes, I have, too; but there's nothing in the regulations to stop that. It only says I cannot go out of the State."

This was quite true, nevertheless it incensed him still more than my silence had done.

"Well, I'll tell you right now; the next time you go galavantin' around the country in an automobile, or the next time you move without letting me know, or the next time you start up a business without permission you'll get yours, and get it good and plenty. You're getting yourself in dead wrong writing this junk for the papers, too; and we'll make it mighty hot for you." He finished with another oath.

"I've just notified you of my change of residence in writing," I replied, "and as for going out of the county, I was with my employer, and my work is liable to take me out of the county any time."

"It is, is it?" he retorted. "Well, you just try it." He said a lot more, to which I listened as calmly as I could, and then I turned to the big man.

"Will you please sign this report, Mr. Older?" I asked, handing him the pen.

Mr. Older, who had been standing behind me, stepped forward and took the pen but made no movement to sign the paper. Instead, he stood looking at the parole officer, who had turned as red as a beet.

"Is this the way you treat paroled men who are making good?" he asked, with a tremor in his voice. "If it is I don't blame some of them for going wrong. You ought to —"

"I — I — I thought you was a paroled pris —, that is, I — well, there's got to be regulations, that's all. I've got to know where my men are, that's what I'm paid for; but in this case, of course, it's different. He's work-

ing on a paper, and of course he might have to go to Oakland or some place like that — that's all right. But he's got no business going up the country in an automobile."

"And why not?" inquired the big man. "Did it hurt any one, and wasn't he with me?"

"Well, I've got my rules and they've got to be lived up to, that's all," repeated the parole officer, gradually regaining his composure. "Of course, if you get the board of directors to say it's all right why that settles it — my hands are washed."

"But your hands are not washed of the other things you said. If there's any 'hot time' coming to Lowrie for the work he is doing you can count me in on it, and also don't forget to count yourself in."

He signed the report and we took our departure. Going up on the street car to the office he was furious, but I only laughed.

"How on earth did you contain yourself when he cursed you that way?" he asked me.

"Oh, just a matter of habit, I guess; I've seen too many men get the worst of it under similar circumstances during the past ten years, and I suppose I'm lacking in what the average man calls 'manhood' as a consequence. If he had got a rise out of me, and you had not been with me, I might be on my way back to San Quentin at this moment. I know the game pretty well and have long since learned that it pays to take an insult from a prison officer or guard, or a policeman or jailer, without trying to show that you are a man. That feeling, that knowledge, may be defined either as cowardice or as self-control; I think it is a mixture of both, but principally cowardice, and it is that cowering, funking, servile attitude on the part of prisoners in general — some in less degree than others, but all, save those who go to the incorrigibles —

that nurtures the desperate ex-prisoner. After a man comes out and realizes what he has taken in silence, he begins to boil — that is, some men do — and when the boiling begins, look out; especially if he be destitute. Some men boil over. I have seen prisoners who have been cursed by a prison guard go off by themselves, with white faces, to weep. I have heard others say: 'Oh, well; my day will come. No man can talk to me that way and get away with it; somebody will pay for it.'"

The next day an editorial appeared in *The Bulletin*. It recited the incident related above and pointed out that it should be the duty of parole officers to encourage rather than discourage their charges, and that if it became necessary to administer a rebuke it should be done in a kindly spirit, and in printable English.

Shortly afterwards I received permission to go anywhere in the State of California, so long as I was working for *The Bulletin*, and since that time there have been a number of changes in the personnel of the parole office. At the present time paroled men are treated as men whenever they report, even though the percentage of violations is slightly in excess of what it was in 1911.

Meanwhile the public interest in "My Life in Prison" had grown to such an extent that hundreds of persons who had not read the opening chapters came to the office to get back papers, and this demand assumed such proportions that it was decided to get out a supplement containing the story to date. This supplement appeared September 23, and a few days later the story was copyrighted, as it was decided that it should be brought out in book form when it was finished in the paper. The supplements — 100,000 copies, I believe — were soon exhausted, and it became necessary to print a second and third edition. It was also about this time that ex-Chap-

lain Drahms of San Quentin took issue with what I had written in the narrative concerning his chaplaincy, and succeeded in getting another evening paper to publish a letter in which he stated that he had, at one time, found it necessary to reprimand me for a slight infraction of the rules, and that it was rancor on my part, due to his reprimand, which had caused me to "attack" him. His letter was so palpably uncharitable and unchristian that it proved a boomerang. It bore out that he was just such a man as I had stated. Besides, he had never reprimanded me. I do not mention this now for any reason, save to to say that with this one exception there was not a public denial of anything I had written, nor has there been a public denial since. I had determined at the start to tell the truth, and in every word I have since written I have kept that determination foremost in my mind. It is in my mind now, and is the basis of this narrative.

CHAPTER XIV

DURING the latter part of September Paul Armstrong's famous drama, "Alias Jimmy Valentine," appeared at the Cort Theatre in San Francisco with its original cast, and I went to see it, as did others who had become interested in the improvement of prison conditions and the methods of handling offenders against the law. The play impressed me deeply, and while talking it over with some friends I said: "I believe it would have a good moral effect if it could be staged at San Quentin." At the time I made the remark I had no idea that it would be acted upon; in fact, I didn't think it could be acted upon, because the chapel at the prison only accommodates 500 persons, and it was out of the question to expect the actors to give three or four performances, even if they agreed to give one. But some one, I don't know just who, laid the matter before the manager of the company, and he, in turn, approached the actors. To the satisfaction of every one concerned, the actors agreed to give the performance gratis — in fact, the leading man and woman — H. B. Warner and Phyllis Sherwood — entered into the plan enthusiastically. The only thing that remained was to get the warden's permission and to solve the problem of presenting the drama so that all the prisoners could see it simultaneously.

When the plan was broached to Warden Hoyle he instantly approved of it — he had seen the play at the Cort himself — and he thought of a way by which the scheme could be carried out satisfactorily. It was that a stage

be erected in a corner of the lower yard and the play given outdoors. Accordingly the prison carpenters went to work. *The Bulletin* rented several hundred chairs, which were transported to San Quentin by Captain Leale of the steamer *Caroline* free of charge, and, under a bright sky, the performance was given a few afternoons later. With the exception of one or two "incorrigibles," every prisoner, including the women, and the condemned men, were permitted to see the play.

It was the first time in the history of American prisons that a bona fide theatrical company had taken its scenery into a prison and presented a real play. It was also the first time that such a play had been given under such conditions in the open air. The steamer *Caroline* transported the actors both ways, thus enabling them to get back to San Francisco in time for the regular evening performance.

That night I secured a copy of one of the photographs which had been made by the prison photographer, wrote a short description of the event and mailed both to an Eastern weekly. The contribution appeared in the following issue of the periodical.

This presentation of "Alias Jimmy Valentine" behind prison walls had the salubrious effect I had anticipated. A number of paroled and discharged prisoners have since told me that the moral of the play impressed them so deeply that they could not forget it, and that they began to think seriously of redeeming themselves that afternoon.

The incident was brought back to my mind recently while listening to a story told by a gentleman at whose home I stopped for a few days in Southern California. He said that he had once attended a baseball game in which the players and nearly all the spectators were deaf

mutes, and that close to where he sat was a deaf mute who was accompanying a girl. The girl was not only a deaf mute, but was also blind. Before the game began the gentleman wondered how a girl thus afflicted could "see" a ball game, but soon after the umpire signalled "play ball" he found out. The girl's companion took one of her hands, and as each play was made he touched her palm and wrist with quick strokes of his fingers, while she laughed and clapped her free hand against her thigh in delight. My friend said the sight affected him deeply, so deeply that he forgot to watch the ball game, he was so lost in watching this exhibition of "seeing" without eyes, ears or voice.

"Alias Jimmy Valentine" was a "touching" lesson to the inmates of San Quentin, for the system renders them deaf, dumb and blind so far as real life is concerned. They might just as well be deaf, dumb and blind physically during the time they spend behind prison walls — in fact better so. It will be a good thing when prisoners are assumed to be human beings by those who now regard them as convicts. It will be a good thing for society. The time will come when those who break the law will be restrained only for the purpose of training, and in that training be permitted to use their senses in a natural manner.

One afternoon at the office my friend Mr. John D. Barry asked me if I would like to accompany him that night to the home of a prominent woman, the wife of a State official. He said that she had asked him to invite me, and that she was greatly interested in my work. I accepted the invitation gladly and that evening we climbed the hill overlooking the bay and entered the garden. The hostess met us on the veranda, where we seated ourselves, and conversed until nearly midnight. I found her

a most delightful woman, full of understanding and real Christianity, and accepted her invitation to call again.

Shortly afterwards I was invited to meet her husband, and made a trip to Sacramento for that purpose. For three hours that night he asked me questions concerning San Quentin; also for my views on capital punishment. When the time came for parting, I felt that I had made a real friend, and an event which occurred a few days later proved my impression to have been correct.

I was at the office going over some proofs one afternoon when I was called to the phone. A woman's voice greeted me. "This is Mrs. ——" she said. "I want you to come to the —— hotel immediately. I will be in a limousine out front."

The message was a peculiar one, and something in the tone of her voice made me feel apprehensive. As I walked to the hotel I kept wondering what it meant.

As I approached the designated place I saw her face framed in the window of the limousine. She was talking with our mutual friend — the one whom I had accompanied to her home a few nights before. She smiled as she saw me, but as they were apparently in a serious conversation I did not approach closely. Presently he withdrew, stopping for a moment to greet me, and she nodded for me to come close.

"Don't be alarmed at what I am going to tell you," she began, "but I think you ought to know. There is a plan to take you back to San Quentin. It is the result of what you have been writing. I have already started the wheels to head it off, and I think it is all right. My husband is away, however, and there may be a slip. Even if there is, don't make any fuss; we will stand by you and see that you get justice. I think it would be well for you to keep some one with you all the time until you hear

from me, directly or indirectly. I believe the order for your return has been signed by one of the prison directors, but the others do not know of it, and I'm quite sure they will not approve."

The rules governing paroled prisoners provide that the signature of one prison director is sufficient warrant for the arrest and return to prison of a paroled man, and that no reason need be assigned for such warrant.

I laughed and tried to appear at ease, but felt the barber's clippers already on my head. I knew how easy it was to get inside the gates of San Quentin and how hard it was to get out again. In fact, the slogan of prisoners is that possession is nine points of the law. The lady had requested me not to say anything to any one about what she had told me, so when I went to my friend, the father of the family in whose home I lived, and told him that I was going to remain in his company until we got home, he did not know why.

After he had finished his day's work we walked to the ferry together and he stopped on the way down to get a drink, inviting me into the saloon. I declined, and asked him to hurry out. We got home without molestation, where I prepared a telegram addressed to the manager of the paper. It was a telegram telling him that I had been suddenly arrested and taken back to San Quentin. I handed it to my friend and asked him to send it immediately should I leave the house that night.

Morning came and I was still free. That afternoon at the office I got word that the matter had been "fixed up," and the incident ended.

Since that time I have often thought what a splendid thing it would have been for the cause had nothing been done to head off the plan for my return. I was in the middle of "My Life in Prison," and thousands of per-

sons were interested. No reason could have been given for my return save that I had left the county without permission a month before, and that offence had already been condoned. It would have been apparent that the revocation of my parole was for the purpose of suppressing the truths I was telling, and I feel quite sure that such a move on the part of the prison authorities would have been fatal to them, and would have accelerated the improvements which are slowly but surely taking place in response to public demand, and under the management of new wardens.

Talking with the big man not long ago, I mentioned this aspect of the incident. I said to him: "Don't you think it was a mistake to head off that plot to take me back? Wouldn't it have drawn public attention to conditions more forcibly than anything could have done?"

He mused for a moment.

"Yes, I think it would," he replied, "but worth-while changes come slowly, and, besides, what would Randolph have done to you? He hadn't changed then, you know."

CHAPTER XV

THIS chapter is going to be entirely about a woman; the most wonderful woman I have ever known. I make this statement at the start as a warning to misogynists, though I really don't believe there is a man in the world who can be properly classified under that head.

This woman wrote to me each week during the years I spent in San Quentin, and more than once importuned me to let her come there to see me. But I had determined that she should never see me in stripes, and to all her pleadings for me to break that resolution I remained obdurate.

When I got out on parole her letters still came each week. I could not go and see her because we were separated by 3000 miles, and the terms under which I was living in the world forbade my going to her. After I had been out three weeks I received a letter from her telling me that she was coming to California to see me. I replied immediately, asking her to let me know just when she would arrive, so that I might meet her. We had not seen each other for twelve years, though we had been together in spirit all the time.

I shall never forget the night she arrived. Late in the afternoon I received a telegram advising me that her train was due at 10 P. M. I was not content to wait and meet her at the ferry. Instead, I crossed the bay and boarded a local, telling the conductor I wanted to go as far as I could to meet the "Overland." He consulted his time table and told me that I could ride as far as Bay Point, in Contra Costa county.

"That's as far as you dare go if the 'Overland' is on time," he said. "Of course, if she's late you might go farther, but I have no way of knowing whether she's late or not."

It was dark when I got off at Bay Point, and the headlight of the "Overland" was already in sight. A minute later, when the heavy train pulled into the station — where it stops for orders — I swung aboard. I got on near the head-end and started walking through the coaches. For some reason I did not scan the faces of the passengers, but passed through several Pullmans rapidly before turning into an end compartment. Without thinking about it, I seemed to know just where to find her, nor was I wrong. There she was in the compartment into which I had turned. She looked up as I entered the doorway — a look of surprise on her face. The surprise instantly turned to joy, however, and a moment later she was in my arms.

The woman was my mother.

So soon as she could command her voice coherently she said, "How did you get here, and how did you find me? I expected to meet you at the terminus."

I explained that I had come out over the line to meet the train, and it made her happy. For the first few minutes we did not talk, we were too busy looking at each other. Abstractedly I picked up an apple from a stand in the corner and began eating it. I could not get over the change which had taken place in her. Instead of twelve years older she looked twenty-five years older, and all she had suffered on my account struck home. When we did begin to talk, we could not talk fast enough, and before we knew it we were at Point Richmond and I was helping get her things together.

It was a clear, starlit night, and the trip across the

bay to San Francisco was glorious. We sat outside on the upper deck. As we approached the ferry landing she asked me if I would direct her to a good hotel.

"You will have to take a room there also, while I am here," she said.

"Hotel, nothing," I replied proudly. "I've already got an apartment, a cosy little apartment overlooking the bay. It has a kitchen, and everything for comfort; I'm sure you'll like it."

"Like it!" she exclaimed. "It was stupid of me not to have thought of such a plan; nothing could suit me better."

In anticipation of her visit I had rented an apartment and had moved from Berkeley a few days before. I had laid in a stock of provisions and done everything I could think of to make the place homelike, all the time hoping she would be pleased and approve of everything.

But when we arrived and I opened the door I got the surprise of my life. A huge bunch of roses confronted me. They were in a beautiful glass vase on the hall table, and there was water in the vase.

"Oh, how beautiful," she exclaimed, dropping her umbrella and running forward. "How thoughtful of you."

"I didn't do it," I blurted, emotionally. "How did they get here?"

"Didn't you get them?" she asked, a trace of disquietude in her voice.

"No," I admitted, reluctantly, "and I don't know how they got here. I left the place locked."

We stood looking at each other for a moment and then I turned into the combined living and dining-room and turned on the lights there.

Again I was surprised. In the centre of the table was

another vase containing carnations, and in the corners at each side of the windows were gorgeous chrysanthemums, yellow and white. An inspection of the bedrooms revealed more flowers, until I almost began to think that I had gotten into a florist's establishment by mistake.

"Who could have done it?" I said, thinking out loud.

"Some of your friends, I suppose," she answered. "Let's look for cards."

I acted on the suggestion, but failed to solve the mystery, and it was not until two days later that I learned the truth. My friend, Mr. Barry, and the lady who had warned me of the plot to revoke my parole were the culprits. Mr. Barry lived close by, and had borrowed the pass-key of the landlady and arranged the flowers during my absence. The lady had ordered her contribution sent to him, and he had characteristically chosen this method of getting them to us. I have never forgotten the scene, nor the kindness, and I never shall.

Mother was not satisfied until she had inspected the kitchen, with its mysterious cupboards, drawers and utensils. It pleased me immensely when she expressed her satisfaction. My only regret was that I had not thought of getting at least one bunch of flowers. The only thing with which she found fault was the kitchen floor. The linoleum was dirty, and she didn't hesitate to say so.

"We must get it cleaned to-morrow," she said teasingly. "You're a splendid housekeeper, but I'm afraid this floor has not seen soap and water for a long time."

That night we sat up and talked until nearly 2 o'clock. To my inquiry if she was hungry, she laughed.

"Hungry! After all these years of hunger to see you? I feel as if I never wanted to eat again."

Nevertheless she was up before I was the next morning, and I awakened to the delicious odor of coffee, and the sizzle of bacon and eggs.

I jumped up, washed hastily, and tiptoed to the kitchen doorway.

There she was, dressed just as she had been the night before — her trunk had not yet been delivered — with only a cloth tied at her waist to protect her dress. She was humming to herself. I finally burst in and the matutinal greetings took so long that the eggs were burned.

I sat down to breakfast in my bathrobe and slippers, and helped to wash the dishes afterward. In fact, I washed the dishes and she dried them. I had often scoured the pans after one of Smoky's famous Sunday afternoon hashes made over the lamp in our cell at San Quentin; why shouldn't I wash dishes for my mother?

CHAPTER XVI

DURING the first two days of my mother's visit she remained at home. The long trip across the continent had tired her more than she had realized in the first excitement of seeing me. I remained at home, also, and save the time it took me each day to write a chapter of "My Life in Prison," and to answer such letters as required immediate attention, I devoted every hour to her. A number of my friends who had learned of her visit extended invitations to dinner and theatre parties, but she asked me to decline them, to say that she had come to see me, and had only a short time to stay. Besides, she shrank from meeting people. My lapse was ever in her mind, though she never referred to it, and I could feel that she preferred to come and go quietly. I could understand her sensibilities perfectly, but other people did not seem to think of them.

The third day we went down town and she purchased a lot of "necessary" things for the apartment. To my masculine eye and mind the place was complete, but every hour she discovered something lacking. I accompanied her into several stores and stood by, trying to appear at ease during the process of purchasing.

While on Market Street she noticed a "sightseeing" auto, and asked me what it was.

"They are vulgarly known as 'rubber-neck wagons,'" I vouchsafed, "and so far as I know, the species is indigenous to the Pacific Coast. Would you like to take a ride in one?"

I fully expected her to say no, but to my horror she said yes. The reply floored me; she had always been so adverse to anything of that kind when I had known her.

"Why, we've already been invited to take a trip through and around the city in a private automobile," I reminded her, "and you declined. Surely you don't want to go in one of those things."

"Yes I do," she insisted. "It will be a new experience."

I was in a corner and did some quick thinking. I was willing to do anything to please her, but I had an innate aversion to "sightseeing" parties. Not that they are not all right for those who like them, but I didn't like them.

I stopped and looked at my watch.

"It's too late to go to-day," I said, "and besides, I couldn't take all these bundles along. One is supposed to be dignified and have class on those high seats. We'll go to-morrow; the morning trips are much pleasanter than those in the afternoon, anyway."

When we got home and had eaten supper, she referred to the proposed trip. Thinking to discourage her, I told her of some of the subterfuges employed by the guides to get people on board their respective vehicles.

"Didn't you notice the two pretty girls on that wagon we saw?" I asked.

"Yes, I did," she replied quickly, "and I thought surely you'd be glad to go along when I asked you, for I saw you looking at them."

"Of course you did," I responded, "but you didn't know why. They were dummies. They were sit —"

"Dummies?" she interrupted. "Why I saw them talking together."

"Oh, I don't mean dummies in that sense," I resumed.

"They just sit there and the result is that young fellows who otherwise would not think of taking the trip see them, say good-bye to a dollar and climb aboard. It is so easy to turn and absently-mindedly ask a question of a stranger when one is on a sightseeing trip, you know; especially if the stranger is a pretty girl."

"Well, I can't see any harm in that," she declared. "A real romance might result; one can never tell."

"Quite true," I agreed, tilting back my chair and stretching my arms as if bored, "but the pretty girl doesn't go along. When the time arrives for starting she smiles sweetly at the passengers and descends to the sidewalk, where she waves her hand to the chauffeur as the wagon moves away."

"And what does she do that for?" asked mother, still uncomprehending.

"For pay," I answered.

"Oh-h-h-h, I see," she said slowly.

I retired that night happy in the belief that I had knocked the tires off the "rubber-neck" wagon trip, and dreamed peacefully.

As we finished drying the breakfast dishes the next morning, mother took off her apron and said, "Come on, let's get ready."

"Ready for what?" I asked.

"Why, for the ride in the 'rubber-neck wagon,' as you call it, sonny," she replied, smiling sweetly.

I realized that I had matched my wits against hers and lost, despite my figment anent the perfidious actions of the pretty girls. I yielded manfully, pretending that I was delighted.

We passed a number of the pleasure vehicles before she finally selected one. It was painted a violent red. I glanced at her swiftly to make sure that she was in ear-

nest, and detected a satisfied twinkle in her brown eyes.

That settled it. I didn't need to have a brick house fall on me, though I suspected she imagined I did.

The wagon no sooner started than I began to descant on the unmitigated joy of a ride in a sightseeing auto. I went into raptures. I indulged in gushing hyperbole. I "wouldn't have missed it for a million dollars." The further I went, the more enthusiastically she agreed, until I finally began to have a glimmering idea that my mother was possessed with a slight sense of humor.

My remarks about "being up in the world" and "being able to look down on people beneath us," proved the final straws.

"For goodness' sake, don't be silly," she objected. "I knew you didn't relish the idea of coming; that's why I am relishing it so much."

At the Cliff House — where we were allowed a few minutes to recuperate — a photographer held up his hand as the wagon approached.

"Please keep your seats, ladies and gentlemen," requested the man who had been giving us a moth-eaten collection of jokes, interspersed with such remarks as, "To your left, ladies and gentlemen, is the celebrated Park Museum, and to your right the bandstand, renowned throughout the world as having the best acow-stic properties of any bandstand in existence," all during the trip. He had pumped this information at us through a megaphone, and I had been more amazed at watching him than by the "wonders" he had described.

"Keep your seats. The gen'leman desires to take a photograph of you."

There was an immediate scramble for cover, on the part of several passengers, three of whom were men. Whether

they were bank absconders, or had merely deserted their wives, I had no means of telling.

"Please keep your seats; it'll take only a moment, an' when you come back from seeing the beach and the other sights the pic'ures'll be ready, an' you can have 'em for two-bits, I mean a quarter, apiece. What better souvenir to send the folks back East? Just a minute; just keep your seats."

I could feel mother's uneasiness, and knew she didn't want to be "taken," but I also sensed that she was afraid I'd ridicule her, and say "I told you so," if she flunked. So we sat there and had our pictures taken with the others, after being admonished to "look pleasant."

"Anything I love is to have my picture taken on a 'rubber-neck wagon,'" I remarked, as the photographer waved his hand and shouted, "All right, thank you one and all."

I descended to terra firma and started to walk off unconcernedly, when I was hailed from above. I turned, shaded my eyes, and gazed intently at the zenith, as if trying to determine where the voice had come from.

"Here I am, right here, young man; and you get back here and help me down at once."

I lowered my eyes to an angle of thirty degrees, where they rested on the figure of my mother. Her face was a picture. It was both amused and exasperated.

"Why, I thought you stepped out on the other side," I apologized, springing forward and giving her my hand.

She did not say a word in reply until she was safe on the ground. Then she turned to me and said: "If you were a boy again, I'd go cut a birch switch."

CHAPTER XVII

"Over the topmost sentry's castellet
Its rugged crest, defying prison walls,
Serenely limns the sky. From each face falls
The gloom of wasted years. Contrition calls
The heart to hope that still, whate'er befalls,
What might have been may be triumphant yet."

THIS verse, taken from an ode to Tamalpais, which I wrote one afternoon while sitting in the prisoners' yard at San Quentin, appealed to my mother so strongly when I read it to her that she wept. I had been going over my papers, and had come across a copy of the verses, and she had asked me to read them to her.

When I looked up and found her weeping, I didn't know what to say to comfort her. She wept quietly for several minutes and then smiled through her tears.

"Don't mind me," she said, "I could not help it. The words 'what might have been' made me think of all the dreams I had for you when you were a little boy, and when I thought of you writing such words in such a place, I seemed to give way here."

She placed her hand over her heart and looked up into my face. I was stroking her grey hair.

"Let's go to Tamalpais to-morrow," I cried impulsively. "I'm sure you'd enjoy it. We go up on the crookedest railroad in the world, and I have been told that one gets a fifty-mile sweep in every direction."

Had I stopped to think, I would not have made such a suggestion on top of her emotions, but sometimes an impulsive thought proves a good one. At any rate, she entered into the plan enthusiastically, and we were soon

discussing it together, with no thought of the sorrow we had just felt.

The next morning we were up early, and on looking out of the windows rejoiced that it was going to be a clear day. As we crossed the bay to Sausalito, mother became very much interested in the various places I pointed out to her — Alcatraz, the Golden Gate, Berkeley, with its hillside "C," and the different "moles."

Going up the mountain we sat in one of the open cars so as to get the best view. Those who have been up Mount Tamalpais need no description; those who have not, need no description, either. They can easily go and see for themselves.

When we got to the top we saw a sign which read: "Twenty minutes' level walk around the mountain," and we followed the path to the left. Every few feet we came upon improvised telescopes, or finders, with notices attached telling what particular point of interest could be located by looking through the instruments. These finders consist of pieces of pipe, arranged on swivels in some cases, by looking through which one may focus on a small area or point. We stopped and looked through each one.

As we rounded the crest toward the east and the sweep of the bay came into view, we stopped and sat down on one of the benches. I reached into my pocket and got a cigarette.

"I wish you'd stop smoking cigarettes," said mother. "Why don't you smoke cigars or a pipe?"

"I don't get any satisfaction from either," I answered. "I've tried both."

She mused for a moment, and then broke into a laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" I asked, with lighted match arrested half way to my mouth.

"I was thinking of you as an old man smoking cigarettes," she replied. "I never saw anything so absurd in my life as that old man we noticed yesterday on the street with a cigarette in his mouth. You surely remember that only boys and callow youths smoke cigarettes in the East. It really seems incredible to see grown men, even old men, smoking them out here."

"It is the custom," I replied. "You know the Spanish and Mexicans smoke cigarettes almost exclusively, and this is a Spanish country, or used to be. It doesn't seem to hurt them; they live just as long."

She tried to get me to promise to swear off, but I wouldn't swear. All I would say was that I would "try." She finally gave it up, and we continued our walk.

Presently we came upon a finder underneath which was a sign reading: "Locating the State Prison at San Quentin."

We had stopped at all the other finders, but I started to pass this one without stopping. She called me back.

"You don't mind if I look, do you?" she asked.

"Why, no, of course not," I answered, "only I thought perhaps you wouldn't care to."

"My boy," she said earnestly, placing her hand on my shoulder, "I spent ten long years with you in that place; night and day I was with you. It isn't idle curiosity that makes me want to look."

I turned away and kicked a small stone down the mountainside, and watched it so long as it was in sight. It started several other stones, some of them larger than it was. "The way one small man can take other and bigger men with him down the moral toboggan," I thought. "Still the other stones must have been loose.

But perhaps the rain and the wind had loosened them."

When I turned back she was gazing intently through the finder. I looked, also. I didn't need a finder. And as I looked I remembered how often, I had gazed up at the top of Tamalpais and wondered if I should ever be up there looking down. Then I thought of the 2000 human beings, men and women — all of the men, sons, some of the women, mothers — cooped up behind those walls. From such a distance it did not look like a prison, it looked like a fort. And, after all, was it not a fort? Was it not a place where these men and women were concealed to protect them against society? The idea was a new one, and I mulled it. At first it seemed kind of topsy-turvy, but the longer I thought on it the clearer it became. I was still thinking when mother ceased her inspection, and took my arm. She did not say a word, and we did not look through any more finders. Instead, we walked on, walked quite rapidly, and I got a feeling that I was leaving something behind me forever. I have that feeling still, only stronger.

At the inn we had a delicious lunch. The dining-room is open on two sides, and San Francisco lay smokily below us as we ate. In the afternoon we visited Muir Woods, a place about which I shall have more to write later.

The days went by rapidly, and the two weeks which my mother had allotted herself to remain with me were soon gone. It seemed like two days. The last night we sat up very late and she gave me a lot of good advice — the first real words of advice since her arrival. She also made me promise that I would keep the apartment after she had gone, so that she could see me "just where I was."

"You can surely get some one to share it with you; some other young fellow, and I think it will be good for you," she said.

I liked the place immensely, myself, and agreed to stay there, provided I could get some one to "go halves," a plan which materialized only a few days later.

The morning came, and I accompanied mother across the bay and saw her aboard the limited. When the conductor called "all aboard," I didn't move, and the train started with me on it. She didn't understand, and became concerned until I told her that I was only going as far as the Sixteenth Street station.

"But, of course, if you want me to get off right now, I'll do it," I chided.

"Wait until you come home, and I'll see that you get off," she said.

And so we parted, my mother and I. No tears, no tremulousness, no lamentations. Just a laugh. That was more than two years ago. I have not seen her since.

Of course I realize that all this about one's mother may prove tiresome to some readers; but I had to write it, and I could write thrice as much. I have left out many (to me) intensely interesting little events and sidelights. In my experience I have learned that it is the boy or girl of 23 or 24, sometimes even younger persons, who forget their mothers. I have also found that as time adds its wisdom to men and women the reverence for motherhood and for fatherhood becomes stronger and stronger.

Quite recently I heard Madame Schumann-Heink sing in the auditorium at Los Angeles. She sang many exquisite and some difficult selections, but a little thing called "Mother Mine" has remained in my consciousness, while all the other songs are gone. Madame Schumann-Heink

is a mother. In the hotel where she was stopping in Los Angeles she heard a baby crying in the next apartment. Anxiously she knocked on the door, and when it opened, asked if she might come in and quiet the little one. The lady who had opened the door did not know that she was talking to a great artist — all she knew was that she was talking to a motherly-looking woman. The permission was given, and in a few minutes the baby was asleep.

Is it possible that that baby, when it becomes a man, will ever lose reverence for motherhood? I hardly think so.

After all is thought and said and done, a mother is the greatest thing in the world — she is the world.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE Saturday following my mother's departure I was invited to go on an automobile trip to the Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton, and gladly accepted. The party consisted of the big man and his wife, Mr. Barry and myself. We left San Francisco early in the morning, stopped at San Jose for lunch, and arrived at the observatory in the afternoon. There are only a few dwellings on the mountain top, and the people who live there have a little community of their own, and are practically out of the world. The big man knew one of the families, who offered us the hospitality of their home and insisted that we should remain over night. We decided to do so, and it was arranged for us to sleep in different houses. I was anxious to go into the observatory and see the big telescope and other instruments before dark, but did not get the chance to do so. While supper was being prepared we sat and talked. Our host was the machinist for the observatory, and I remember one story which he told. Before taking the position at the observatory he had been a machinist in a large city, and on one occasion had been asked to address a mass meeting of men in his craft. He appeared at the meeting in his working garb, and made his speech in that attire. All the other speakers had dressed themselves for the occasion, but he wore his overalls and a rough coat.

After the meeting was over, one of the committeemen approached him and hinted that it would have been better had he changed his clothing for the occasion. He

nodded, but made no reply. He also heard others comment about it. Some weeks later he was asked to speak again and consented to do so. When the evening arrived for the speech he hired a dress suit, but did not leave for the meeting place until late. As the time approached for him to speak, and he did not appear, the committee became uneasy. A moment before the appointed hour, however, a messenger boy entered the hall, hurried down the aisle, and handed the chairman a package marked "Important. Open immediately." The chairman followed instructions, and when the wrapping was removed a dress suit, labeled with the name of the speaker, was disclosed. The assembly saw the force of the lesson, and loud cries of "Brandt, Brandt," filled the hall. Brandt, who had been standing in the rear, stepped forward and mounted the rostrum. He was dressed in his overalls and jumper. As soon as he could make himself heard, he said:

"I spoke here several weeks ago, and I was criticised for wearing the clothes I work in. I am here again tonight in the same clothes. The question is, do you want me, or do you want the dress suit?"

"You, you!" was the prompt response from all over the hall.

The reason this story impressed me so much was because I thought of the effect if a discharged prisoner should come over to San Francisco in stripes and endeavor to mingle with the throng, ride on the street cars, go into the moving picture shows, try to get work. You can imagine for yourself what the result would be. Clothes count so much with us, despite our protestations to the contrary.

After supper we went into the main building and climbed the narrow stairway leading to the big rotunda.

The professor in charge informed us that the 13-ton telescope had been "set" for the night, as a photograph was to be taken, with an all-night exposure.

We looked out through the aperture surrounding the massive instrument and saw that it was pointed at an almost imperceptible star. I asked if we might look through the telescope, and permission was granted. One after another we mounted the ladder to the little platform above. When my turn came and I placed my eye at the aperture I could scarcely credit what I saw. The distant star resolved itself into a constellation much like the milky way. It seemed so incredible that I removed my eye from the telescope and looked with naked sight again. There was the star, faint and tiny. I looked through the telescope again, and again saw the constellation.

When I got back to the floor of the rotunda I did some thinking. What a puny, insignificant atom a human being was, after all. How could any man, after contemplating the wonders of the starry firmament, presume for an instant to think himself better than any of his fellows?

For all I knew, for all any one knew, each one of the stars comprising that unthinkably remote constellation might be inhabited by millions upon millions of conscious entities, each one of whom might be a thousand times more intelligent than any of us.

After we had all looked through the telescope, the professor explained the workings of the big instrument. We learned that the huge dome, weighing hundreds of tons, was operated by clock-like machinery in such a manner that it moved in a direction opposite to that of the earth's movement, so that the telescope, once set to photograph a star, remained focused on that star all night. The telescope, when not "set," could be moved with one

finger. It is marvellous that man can adjust such ponderous machinery to such a delicate nicety.

In the cellar of a stone building we were shown even more delicate instruments designed to record earthquakes, and learned that the earth is quaking all the time. A needle adjusted in such a manner that it is free from the regular movement of the earth — suspended in space, so to speak — records these vibrations on a sheet of paper, which is laid off into tiny squares. Whenever a temblor of any magnitude takes place in any part of the world, it is recorded by this instrument, and the approximate location can be determined. We were permitted to look at the moon and stars through the auxiliary telescopes, and spent an exciting hour.

The next morning when we got up we found that it had frozen during the night. There was ice everywhere. We learned that during the winter months communication with the outside world, save by telephone and telegraph, is practically cut off. At the invitation of our host we took a walk to the "highest point," where the water tanks that supply the residents are located. From the valley the dome of the observatory appears to be the highest point, but it is not.

When the time came for leaving we were importuned to come again, and promised to do so.

"If you young fellows want some exercise," said our host, turning to Mr. Barry and myself, "I'll run with you down the trail to where it meets the road about a mile from here. Going by the road it is nearly four miles to where the trail crosses. Let's see if we can beat the auto there."

After exacting a promise from the big man that he would wait for us in case he reached the crossing first we started out. We ran nearly all the way, and the auto,

creeping around the curves in the tortuous road, was in sight nearly all the time. As we neared the crossing it looked as if we were going to be beaten, but by putting on an extra spurt of speed we managed to arrive coincidentally with the machine, though we were almost out of breath. It was an exciting run in the crisp morning air, up there above the "smoke and din" of civilization, and I shall never forget it.

More than a year later when *The Bulletin* made an appeal for funds to assist indigent persons, the people living on Mt. Hamilton took up a collection and sent it in. Some of them have since been in San Francisco, and it was a pleasure to meet them.

My experience has been that the most whole-souled people are the ones who live in the country, or the ones who would live there if they could.

CHAPTER XIX

By the time "My Life in Prison" had been running two months I had received more than 1000 letters, many of which were so remarkable that the editors of *The Bulletin* decided to publish them. Accordingly, in the edition of Saturday, October 25, a full page of the paper was devoted to that purpose. Among the letters were three or four from ex-guards at the penitentiary, and in each instance these letters from ex-guards corroborated what I had written in the narrative. Not only ex-guards, but men who were at the time employed at San Quentin visited *The Bulletin* office to remind me of important happenings in order that the story should be as complete as possible. A number of the suggestions thus made were subsequently incorporated into the narrative.

About the 5th of November a gentleman called at *The Bulletin* office and asked me if I would speak before the Commonwealth Club at its luncheon on the following Saturday. Of course I had heard of the Commonwealth Club, and knew that it was comprised of the representative business and professional men of San Francisco. I realized that the opportunity was a golden one, and regretted keenly that I was not a speaker. In this frame of mind I referred the gentleman to the managing editor, in the hope that perhaps some representative of the paper might be appointed to accept the invitation in my stead. The gentleman was closeted with the managing editor for half an hour before he left the building, and then I was sent for.

"Don't you think you could muster up enough self-assurance to tackle this opportunity?" I was asked.

"I'd like to feel that I could," I replied, "but I'm afraid it would be a fizzle, and rather than have it that I think it would be better not to attempt to speak at all."

"Couldn't you write something, and read it?" he asked.

"I could surely write something," I rejoined, "but as for reading it, I don't know. I'm afraid not."

"Why not try?" he persisted. "It is an opportunity for reaching some of the influential men of the city, and the very fact that you have been invited to speak before them is in itself a recognition of your work. I'll telephone and say you will appear and in the meantime you can write something. You've got all week to do it in."

"Very well, I'll make the effort," I agreed, "but don't blame me if I go speechless. Why can't you appear in my stead?"

"I never made a speech in my life," he replied, visibly disconcerted by the suggestion.

"And neither have I," I reminded him.

"Oh, you can do it all right," he replied, "all you need is to feel confidence in yourself."

The days that followed were filled with apprehension. As Saturday approached I felt like a condemned man, and when we started from the office for the Palace Hotel, where the luncheon was to take place, I felt that my last hour had come. My feelings must have been apparent, for I was not trusted to go alone. I left the office with a man on either side of me, just like a culprit under arrest.

In the crowd at Third and Market Streets a sudden temptation came upon me. Why not "duck"? Why not make a break for it?

Again my thoughts must have carried, for the big man very gently, but firmly, placed his hand on my shoulder as we serpentined through the throng, and he kept it there until we turned into the hotel entrance.

The lobby was full of people, all of whom seemed intent on business. They were going in all directions, and from somewhere in the distance I heard music. By making inquiries we learned where the Commonwealth luncheon was being held and made our way to the hall. I was in a kind of daze as we entered, but saw that the room was filled with tables and that each table was occupied. A special dispensation had been made for the occasion, which permitted ladies to be present.

The gentleman in charge met us near the door and conducted us to the speaker's table, where we sat down to lunch. I couldn't eat, I was too excited and nervous. I kept saying to myself: "Ladies and Gentlemen: This is the first time in my life that I have ever attempted to speak in public. I have a message that I feel deeply, but I wish some one else were in my shoes to deliver it." Over and over and over I repeated the words to myself. I had decided that I would preface my reading with a short talk in order that I might appear at ease. But my effort to keep these words in mind was a failure because I was continually interrupted by remarks and questions from the other persons at the table. Among other things I had decided that I must try to say something funny, something that would bring a laugh, and I had what I considered a good little anecdote memorized for that purpose. I had heard that the best way to get people to listen was to make them laugh.

I don't know how many of the readers of this narrative have gone through the experience I am trying to de-

scribe. Those who have will readily recognize the symptoms; those who have not may perhaps do so in the future.

At last the chairman arose from his seat and tapped for attention. In a few seconds the noise of conversation and the clatter of dishes ceased. Notwithstanding my perturbation I noticed that the waiters withdrew from the room immediately, and wondered why. The head waiter waited to make sure that they were all gone, and then followed. It struck me as incongruous. If they were good enough to serve food why weren't they good enough to listen to what was to be said?

The chairman spoke fluently, without apparent effort, and brought several laughs. I envied him hugely, but felt relieved that some one was speaking before me. In a few minutes he began talking about me, saying that he felt sure that I would have something to say that would be interesting. He finished by stating that I had never spoken in public before in my life, and that I was apprehensive of failure. Then, after calling on me, he resumed his seat amidst a burst of applause.

I waited until the applause had subsided and then got up. I stepped behind my chair, and leaned against it for support. I had no more idea what I was going to say than I had of what is in the centre of the earth. The chairman had taken my memorized opening words out my mouth and left me at sea. All I realized at the moment was that I was the focus of three or four hundred pairs of eyes and that I was expected to make noise of some kind.

I've forgotten just what I did say at the start. I know I said a few words before reaching into my inside coat pocket and producing the manuscript. When I began to read my voice trembled and I knew that I must over-

come it. I also suddenly remembered what a friend had told me the day before. He had said: "The tendency of inexperienced speakers is to drop the voice at the end of sentences. Don't do that. Instead, raise your voice as you near the end of a thought, and finish strong."

In a few minutes I began to gain confidence. Silence had fallen over the room, and my voice sounded clear and strong to myself. Once or twice I was interrupted by applause, and it disconcerted me. Although I had rewritten my "speech" several times I did not follow copy. As I went along I came to places which I instinctively knew would not sound well if spoken. In place of a number of polysyllables which were interspersed through the manuscript I used simpler words. Since that time experienced writers have told me that the best test of writing is to read it aloud, and I have followed that plan whenever I have had the time to do so.

Near the end of my paper I had an anecdote showing that men in prison, no matter what they have been sent there for, have their own sense of honor, and that this sense may be developed into a broader honor. There was a detail lacking in the anecdote, and before I knew it I had lowered the manuscript and was talking extemporaneously.

When I finally finished I was greeted with applause, and sat down with the feeling that I had "made good"—at least I had "gotten by." It was truly gratifying to feel that way; not self-gratification so much as good for the cause I represented. A number of the men and women present pressed forward and shook hands with me. Each of them wished me success in my work, and a number promised to contribute toward the bureau for helping discharged prisoners to get employment.

The following Saturday I appeared before the Women's

Equal Suffrage League at its luncheon in Scottish Rite Hall. Miss Helen Todd spoke also. I had determined to make a supreme effort to speak without notes, without reading. I managed to talk for fifteen minutes or so before going mentally blind. I don't know how long I stood on the platform frantically trying to scare up an idea before I recalled that I had placed a manuscript in my pocket for use in just such a contingency. I reached in and got it, and finished my address by reading.

As a result of these two public appearances I received a score of requests to speak before churches, clubs, schools, fraternities and other organizations. I accepted a number of these invitations, and before Christmas I had practically overcome my nervousness, though to this day I cannot shake off self-consciousness when I begin to speak before an audience.

CHAPTER XX

Soon after I began speaking in public I conceived the idea of having persons in the audiences ask questions, and in that way I learned a great deal. I was speaking in Berkeley one night along with my friend Ed Morrell, and at the conclusion of our talks the usual invitation was extended for questions. A gentleman whom I later learned was a physician arose and asked me if I believed there was such a thing as a "criminal germ." He asked the question in such a way as to convey the impression that he believed there was. In reply I pointed out that the difference between what we call sin and what we call crime is purely arbitrary; that the stealing of a few apples is wrong (it is considered a sin), while the stealing of a barrel of apples is a crime. I then asked him if he believed in sin germs.

In reply he said that everybody was prone to sin, but that he did not believe in sin germs.

"Given the temptation, and under stress of certain circumstances, any one is liable to commit what we call crime," I replied, "yet I don't believe in a criminal germ. I don't believe in congenital criminality, save where a person is born insane, or with a tendency toward insanity, and it surely is not right to punish insane persons. To restrain them for their own good as well as for the good of society is proper, but to punish them is monstrous."

A rather lengthy discussion followed, in which a number of persons in the audience took part, but the con-

sensus of opinion seemed to be that "crime," in so far as crime against property is concerned, is a matter of dollars and cents, more than a question of morality.

In the audience that night were two ex-prisoners, and in the course of my remarks I mentioned the fact. As soon as I did so there was a general turning of heads; everybody looked at everybody else. I wondered what made them all do it.

As Christmas approached I received several invitations to dinner, but managed to evade all of them. The thought of talking shop on that day was repugnant. I had not had a free Christmas for eleven years, and I determined to make this one a day of real freedom.

During the night before Christmas I imagined I heard strange noises in the dining-room of the apartment, and once or twice I was tempted to get up and investigate, but was too lazy. But when I got up in the morning and entered the room the noises were explained. There stood a Christmas tree, gorgeous with decorations and tinsel, and underneath were a number of packages. While I was still standing there, lost in emotions, the door of my partner's bedroom opened and he appeared on the scene. He pretended to be greatly astonished, but when I tackled him and we rolled on the floor together in a friendly wrestling bout, and when I threatened to "knock the stuffing out of him," he "owned up" to the conspiracy. Along with other friends he had helped prepare the Christmas tree during the night, and the "others" would be in for breakfast at 9 o'clock.

"And we won't have to cook it, either," he finished, dancing about in his robe de chambre like a maniac, as if we had escaped the task of building new pyramids or digging the Panama Canal single-handed.

"Who's going to do the cooking?" I asked.

"The ladies," he replied, bowing very low with his hand over his heart.

Since we had been living together it had been our custom to get our own breakfast, and our "housekeeping" was something of a joke. Our system was to use up all the dishes and have a general dish washing bee two or three times a week. Also, some of the hot cakes he made would have been valuable working material for a rubber factory. The thought of having a real breakfast, cooked by "the ladies" appealed to me immensely. I shaved hurriedly and got dressed.

Promptly at 9 o'clock the party arrived, four of them, three ladies and a gentleman; and half an hour later we sat down to the best breakfast I had eaten since my mother's visit. After the meal was over we all helped to remove the dishes to the kitchen, and then cleared the dining-room for the event of the day — the opening of the packages. Each member of the party received a "funny package," and mine consisted of a mechanical dog that was so intelligent he could almost gnaw a bone. One of the ladies had heard me remark some time before that I would like to have a dog, and this was the result. Two of the ladies were unmarried, and they received gorgeous dolls. We spent an hour or more in relaxation, just like children, and it did us all good.

The company departed about noon, as did my partner, and I was left alone. I shall not try to describe how I felt. It was a dreary day outside and my thoughts went over to San Quentin and into the jails and hospitals and orphan asylums. I tried to shake off the depression but could not do so.

When evening came I determined to go out to a restaurant and have dinner alone. I had heard of a restaurant on Broadway, where the music was said to be good, and

went there. I wanted to lose my identity for the evening, but it was not to be.

The waiter looked familiar, and I saw him eyeing me closely as I gave my order. Notwithstanding the fact that it was Christmas the place was crowded, and he was kept pretty busy, but not so much so as to prevent him from giving me more attention than the others whom he was waiting on. I took my time and ate slowly. The music was excellent, and I was trying to think where I had seen the waiter before.

Finally, when the crowd began to thin out he came and stood by my table.

"You don't remember me, do you?" he asked.

"I can't say that I do," I replied, "though your face is familiar."

He looked around to make sure that no one was near him and then said, "Don't you remember. 'Lefty Smith'?"

He had no sooner mentioned the name than it all came back to me. He was one of the men I had known at San Quentin, though he had been out a number of years. During my time there nearly 7000 prisoners came and left and it was not to be wondered at that I could not remember all of them. Scarcely a day passes even now that I do not see a face in the crowd and wonder where I have seen it before. In some of the remote places in the State I have met and talked with ex-prisoners. They are everywhere, many of them settled down and living useful lives. It is this kind of ex-prisoner that the world does not hear of, but when an ex-prisoner "goes wrong" it is blazoned, and the public gets the impression that ex-prisoners are a "bad lot" in general.

"Certainly, I remember you," I replied, extending my hand.

"No, I can't shake hands here," he objected. "You're a patron and I'm a waiter. We'll take the thought for the deed. I've been working here nearly a year now, and, of course, nobody knows my past."

"But why should you make yourself known to me?" I asked. "Suppose I should tip you off."

He laughed rather constrainedly and looked at me in surprise.

"I didn't think you could have even such a thought, let alone your doing such a thing," he said. "It's the fact that it is you that made me 'spring' myself. What makes you talk that way?"

"Simply because you are foolish to make yourself known to any one," I replied. "I didn't know who you were, and it would be policy on your part not to make yourself known to any one. You might make a mistake. And suppose these people should find out who you are. Right away you would think back and say to yourself, 'Only so-and-so knew who I was and where I was working,' and you would suspect that person of having harmed you; don't you see?"

He thought for a moment and then admitted that he "guessed" I was right.

We had a prolonged conversation and he told me what had become of a number of the old-timers whom we had both known.

As I got up to leave I glanced at the clock. It was nearly 10. I had been in the restaurant nearly three hours. I had gone out to have Christmas dinner alone, unknown, free, and this had been the result.

Still, I didn't regret it; by writing and speaking before the public I had separated forever from being myself. I had become public property.

CHAPTER XXI

One reason why I had wanted to be alone Christmas night was because I was facing a week which I felt was going to be one of the most important I had yet lived. A few days before Christmas the manager of the Empress Theatre had approached me and asked me if I would appear at his house during the week between Christmas and New Year's. Before giving him a reply I had consulted the big man, to whom I said that I felt a great many people could be reached by such an appearance on my part, and that I would donate my salary for the work to the prisoners' employment bureau.

"What will they give you?" he asked.

"I don't know," I replied, "but I am going to ask for $250."

"I don't think you'll get it," he said, "but don't go for any less."

Acting on this advice I walked up to the office of the manager at the Empress and inquired what salary he would pay me for the proposed week's engagement.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"Well, I don't know anything about this business, and I don't know what I am worth to you as an attraction," I said. "I realize that you wouldn't have asked me if you didn't think it a good business venture, and you ought to know what you can pay better than I know what to ask."

"But that is not the custom," he replied; "the performer always names the salary, and we either accept or

reject it. What is the lowest figure you will take?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars," I said decisively.

He looked at me peculiarly and then asked if I would sign a contract at once.

Elatedly I replied that I would, but with one proviso, that it should be stated on all billboards and programmes that my entire salary was to go to the Mutual Aid and Employment Bureau, as I didn't want the public to get the impression that I was appearing in vaudeville for gain or that I was commercializing the cause for which I stood.

"I'll do that," he replied, "and I'll go you one better. I'll give you 50 per cent. of the gross receipts over $—— for the week. I believe we will break all records, and I'm willing to split the extra income with you for the bureau."

He then called in his stenographer and the contract, by which I bound myself to appear three times daily, and as many times as wanted on holidays and Sundays, for the period of one week, was drawn up and signed. We shook hands and I was instructed to be on hand at 10 o'clock the following Sunday morning for rehearsal.

I left the manager and felt that I had done a good stroke of business so far as the money end of the engagement was concerned, but when I met the dramatic critic for *The Bulletin* a few minutes later and told him what I had done he called me a chump.

"Why in thunder didn't you tell me what you were doing?" he asked. "Two hundred and fifty dollars for a stunt like that? Why, you're worth twice that much at this time."

On his own accord the dramatic critic made a quiet investigation and learned that the management had been prepared to offer me $600 for the week if I asked for it.

They had decided on that as the maximum figure before I went near their office.

Within twenty-four hours after I had signed the contract the billboards throughout the city were covered with the announcement that I was to appear at the Empress during the following week. When I saw the first one of these signs it made me feel queer. I stopped to read it and felt that passers-by must surely know that I was the person whose name appeared in such glaring letters, but was relieved when I read the announcement at the bottom concerning the disposition of my salary.

Sunday morning I went to the theatre and reported for "rehearsal." I was assigned to a dressing-room, and then waited in the wings for my "turn." There was a trained-bird act on the bill, and the noise made by the parrots was deafening, though the performers in the other acts did not seem to mind it. The rehearsal consisted in going over the various acts with the orchestra. Of course the performers, playing the same parts, or doing the same stunts week after week, did not need rehearsal, but the orchestra had to be familiarized with what they would be expected to do at certain moments when the bona fide performance was on.

I found by consulting the programme that I was well down near the end of the bill, and settled myself on a piece of stage furniture to await my turn. Finally my name was called and I stepped out onto the stage. The big empty house, dark save for reflection rays from the few lights in the orchestra pit, looked ghostly, with its rows and rows of seats extending back into the gloom. In a few hours I would be facing those same seats, only they would be filled with human beings, and a glare of light would be on my face. The thought made me uneasy.

"What's the music for your act?" a voice asked.

It seemed to come from my feet, and I looked down and saw the director of the orchestra looking up at me.

"I haven't any," I replied.

"Not even entrance music, not even a chord or something?" he inquired.

"Nothing," I answered.

"Oh, you ought to have at least a chord," he said. "Let's see if we can't fix up something."

"What's the matter with a strain from Annie Laurie," some one suggested.

"Just the thing," said the director. "Step back into the wings and we'll play Annie Laurie until you appear. That will be your cue all the week."

I did as directed, and when they started playing I stepped out, stopping in the centre of the stage but close to the footlights.

"I'd advise you to stand back of the proscenium," suggested the stage manager, "your voice will carry better if you do."

He showed me where to stand, and after telling me that I would "work in one," informed me that my rehearsal was over. At the time I did not know what he meant by "work in one," but learned subsequently that he referred to the first drop back of the footlights, before which I was to appear for my act."

I remained to see the rest of the acts rehearsed, and was introduced to most of the performers, all of whom I found to be wholesouled, unpretentious and unaffected. Two little Australian girls, who were billed for a song and dance act, bantered me a good deal as to which one should "make me up" when they learned that I was green in the business.

I persisted that I was not going to wear any makeup, that I was going to appear just as I was.

"Why, you'll look like a ghost," said one of them. "You'll have to wear at least a little, and I'm going to put it on for you. Will it be all right?"

"I guess it will be, if you say so," I replied, though I already had my mind made up to do my "act" without cosmetics.

A brown bear, which was in a cage near the "prop" room, interested me. I learned that he was being transported about the country by the members of one of the acts, and being trained for future use.

"You see, we are traveling all the time, and the only way we can train our new animals is to take them along with us," said the young fellow who had the bear's training in hand. "It makes it hard on the animals, and expensive for us, but one in this business has to be planning ahead all the time. The public demands something new and original continually, and that demand has to be met."

The manager asked me to go to lunch with him, but I declined, although I promised to take dinner with him one evening during the week.

Outside the streets were deserted, though it was nearly noon. At first I wondered, but suddenly remembered that it was Sunday and in three more hours I would be an "actor."

CHAPTER XXII

As I approached the theatre at 2 o'clock that afternoon the first thing I saw was the big electric sign out in front: "DONALD LOWRIE. MY LIFE IN PRISON." Although it was broad daylight, these signs were lighted, and so regulated that they fluttered to catch the eyes of passers-by. Subsequently I learned that these signs signified that I was the head-liner, or "chief attraction" for that week.

To see one's name on billboards is a sensation, but to see it blazoned in electric lights is a greater sensation, and somehow I felt that I was cheapening the cause for which I stood. It was with a sense of misgiving that I made my way through the stage entrance and into my dressing-room, where I sat down alone and tried to think what I should say when my turn came. I knew that people who attend vaudeville performances expect to be amused, especially during holiday time, and that I must not preach nor be too serious. I also knew that the majority of those who might come on account of the "headliner" would do so out of curiosity, and not because they felt any particular interest in the subject. At the same time, I was determined to try to make them feel the sincerity of my motive in appearing, and I decided to endeavor to tell a few interesting anecdotes which would incidentally disclose what the prison system was. I had been told by the stage manager that my time limit was fifteen minutes, which meant that I was not to

waste a word if I was to accomplish anything other than mere entertainment.

Presently there came a knock on my door, and in response to my "Come in" the young fellow in the next dressing-room entered. He was "doing" a little rural sketch with his wife, and I had met them in the morning, and liked them.

He was in his undershirt and had on a pair of flounced, knee-length overalls and barber-pole stockings.

"I'm just getting ready to make up," he announced, "and came in to see if you want anything."

While speaking he inspected my appearance.

"Don't wear tan shoes," he advised. "They make your feet look big on the stage. And if I were you I'd change that brown suit for a dark one. Dark clothes look best for a single act like yours. You'd better come in and let us make you up; I see you haven't got any make-up in your room," he added, glancing around.

"But I'm not going to make up," I said. "I'm going on just as I am."

"Don't be foolish," he replied. "You don't realize what a difference a little color will make, and from the house it looks natural. If you go on as you are, with that pale skin, you'll look like a ghost, just as the girls told you this morning. You'd better take my advice."

While he had been saying this another performer entered, and added his persuasion.

"Well, I suppose you folks know best," I said. "I'll try the make-up once. If I don't like it I can let it go afterwards."

In the next room my friend and his wife pencilled my eyebrows and lashes, rouged my cheeks, carmined my lips and powdered my nose until I felt like a clown getting ready to turn flips and handsprings. To my running fire

of rebellion they kept admonishing me to "Keep still; we are doing this."

At last they appeared satisfied, and stepped back to survey their handiwork.

"Fine, fine!" exclaimed the lady. "It makes all the difference in the world."

My lips felt sticky and uncomfortable and I licked them preparatory to making a reply.

"Oh, my, don't do that," she exclaimed, "you've got to keep the color there; you mustn't lick them."

"Is it all right to talk?" I inquired meekly.

"Oh, yes, but not too much. Wait until you've done your turn," she laughed.

I thanked them, and went out. An acrobatic act was on, and I stood in the wings watching it. Presently I heard a familiar voice, and turned. My friend Mr. Barry was coming toward me, but had not yet seen me. He was talking with a friend, and both were looking out toward the performance. He was quite close before he looked my way, and then he said: "My, my, who is this handsome young man?"

"It's supposed to be me," I answered ungrammatically, "but I feel like an animated bottle of cologne; do I look like one?"

"Not exactly," he replied, "but you do look different. How soon do you go on?"

"Turn after next," I informed him. "Are you going to remain?"

"Yes, but I'm going out front, and I'll let you know how it goes."

I thanked him, and after giving me some pointers he left me.

As the time approached for my appearance I began to feel cold, and was tempted to go into my dressing-room

until called. But the electrician and some of the stage hands were talking with me and I couldn't very well get away. I was trying to keep in mind what I had decided to say, but it was futile.

At last the encore of the act preceding mine was finished, the curtain dropped and the orchestra struck up "Annie Laurie." I was standing in the first entrance, close to the electrician's switch-board, with the manager and the stage manager behind me. My feet seemed to have suddenly turned to lead.

"Now, now!" said a voice at my ear. At the same time some one nudged me in the back. It may seem strange, but at that moment I thought of pictures I had seen of men walking the plank with pirates' bayonets prodding them to their doom. If I was going to die an early histrionic death I would at least die game, so out I went. I did not look at the audience as I walked, but waited until I turned and faced the house. The theatre was packed and the audience was applauding. The footlights shining into my face annoyed me and I took a step forward. Then I made a slight bow. (A friend told me afterwards that it looked as if my head had been jerked with a string.)

Like most inexperienced speakers I started to talk before the applause had subsided. I don't know what I said, but what I do know is that I suddenly became conscious that my voice was the only sound in the vast place and for a moment it disconcerted me.

How I got through that first "performance" I don't know, but my auditors listened patiently and when I walked off I was greeted with prolonged applause. As I entered the wings some one met me and pushed me back toward the stage.

"Take an encore, take an encore," said a voice.

I stepped out a few feet and bowed.

When it was over I was surrounded by the stage hands and performers.

"You did fine!" was the general exclamation. "All you need is a little more self-confidence. You'll be all right after two or three times."

I got to my dressing-room as soon as I could and sat down. I was weak, and rivulets of perspiration were rolling down the centre of my back.

I was still sitting there when the young fellow who had helped make me up opened the door and entered without knocking.

"Here, take this," he said, offering me a small glass full of whisky.

Parole regulations, my abstinence, everything was forgotten. Mechanically I took the glass and drank the contents. He had a glass of water in his other hand and gave it to me, but even after drinking the water I choked. It was the first whisky I had tasted in fifteen years. Even before my commitment to San Quentin I had not indulged in intoxicating liquors, save on very rare occasions, and then only one drink.

"I had no idea you were in such a nervous state," said the young fellow. "You've got an hour and a half before the next performance. You'd better go out in the fresh air and take a walk."

I thanked him and he left me.

In a few moments I began to feel the false exhilaration which follows a drink of whisky, and began to think that I was all right after all. I got up, put on my hat and coat and went out to Market Street.

CHAPTER XXIII

I WALKED two blocks, lost in abstraction, before I began to notice that persons I passed looked at me strangely, some of them in astonishment, others in outright derision. "Can they be people who saw me at the theatre?" I thought, but I dismissed the idea immediately. They were all going toward the theatre and it was not probable that they had been present to hear me talk. Suddenly it occurred to me that perhaps the drink I had taken had affected me to such an extent that it was noticeable. I did feel a little dizzy and light-headed. But on watching my feet I saw that I was walking straight and that my steps were regular.

Presently I met two girls who were walking arm in arm. They laughed right in my face and stood staring after me. I knew then that there must be something wrong with my appearance, and turned into the arcade of a store to inspect myself in a mirror.

One look was sufficient! It paralyzed me!

I had left the theatre with the make-up on my face!

My hand went to a pocket and I pulled out a handkerchief. I did the best I could, but it was impossible to remove the stuff entirely, and I was obliged to walk back to the theatre with my head down.

On regaining the seclusion of my dressing-room I tried to get the make-up off with soap and water, but it seemed like pouring water on a duck's back. At last, thoroughly disgusted, I knocked on the next door, and when it opened asked the young fellow what to do.

"What on earth have you *been* doing?" he asked, calling for his wife to come and see. I stood there while they both laughed at me. Finally he said: "You don't want to take it off; you're going on again pretty soon; what's the use of making up twice? But you've got to be fixed up again; you've spoiled it."

"Tell me how to get the stuff off," I repeated. "I'm not going to wear any make-up, and that's all there is to it."

Again they tried to dissuade me, but I remained firm, until they desisted and gave me the cold cream with instructions how to use it.

When I went on for my second appearance I felt more at ease, and began to feel that I should be able to fill the engagement without mishap. I appeared five times that afternoon and evening, and by the time the last show was over I began to realize why performers refer to their art as "work."

As the work progressed I not only gained confidence, but I learned through letters and oral comment that I was creating the impression which I desired to create — that I was a spokesman for the 3000 prisoners in the State penitentiaries, a spokesman pleading for Christian treatment for the wrongdoer, so that he might be redeemed rather than damned. At one of the matinees in mid-week a bunch of the boys from the office occupied one of the boxes, and one evening I saw Warden Hoyle and Prison Director Duffy in the audience. Before the week was over I was speaking easily, and had got so that I could look over the audience calmly and pick out persons I knew.

Also, a great many ex-prisoners lay in wait for me at the stage entrance to ask for assistance. Some of them even got past the doorkeeper and onto the stage looking

for me. It was mid-winter and they were without food or shelter, and could not get work.

Of course I was interested in the audiences, but what interested me more was the life of the performers. Most of them came to the theatre at 2:30 in the afternoon, put on their costumes, made up and remained behind the scenes, save when performing, until the last show was concluded at 10 or 11 o'clock. They had their meals sent in from a near-by restaurant. I inquired why they did this and learned that it was too much effort to take off costumes and go out for dinner. There was only an interval of two hours between the last afternoon and the first evening show, and to hurriedly wash up, change clothes, eat dinner and rush back again to prepare for the evening performances was much more trying and arduous than to remain and have the evening meal served in the dressing-rooms.

On one occasion during the week the performers clubbed together and had a "spread" on the stage during the interval between the afternoon and evening shows. What struck me more forcibly than anything else was that these men and women, most of them far away from home and their loved ones, were obliged to disport themselves four or five times a day for the edification of the holiday crowds that filled the theatre at each performance, no matter how they felt in spirit. And they were always jolly and goodnatured, or apparently so. One night while conversing with a performer in his dressing-room I received a shock. He had been reminiscing and suddenly said:

"You wouldn't think I've done time, would you?"

I have already said it was a shock — and it was — but I didn't let him know it.

"Why not?" I answered, quickly. "A good many brainy and capable men have been behind the bars. One

meets them every day without knowing it. It is only when it is known that people begin to sniff. You or I can go from here to a fashionable church, or to an exclusive reception, and mingle with the people in either place without attracting attention. We look like other men, and we both have good manners and are fairly intelligent. But let it be known that we have served time and what a change. We should instantly be left alone, probably escorted to the door, or at least asked to leave. To me there would be just as much sense in ostracizing a man who had suffered an attack of measles or influenza, and recovered."

"Yes, I did two years back in York State," he continued, as if anxious to let me know definitely. "I was only a kid, and got off on the wrong foot, but I've worn stripes and had my head shaved and walked in lock-step and spent sleepless nights fighting bed-bugs in a cold cell. It was a good many years ago, but I can't forget it."

He looked up as if he expected me to ask what crime he had committed, but I didn't. I was wondering why he should have told me. He had done the same thing as the waiter had done Christmas night. Since that time I have had a great many men voluntarily tell me, or write to me, that they have been in prison. Some of these men are holding responsible positions. One is working for a big corporation and would lose his place instantly should his past become known. I have tried to reason the thing out, but cannot. I know had I started out to make my way in the world and not let people know I should have remained silent, save, of course, in the event of marriage. But so many men whose pasts are unknown to their employers and friends have made a confidant of me — and for no good reason that I can think of.

"You will not tell any one what I have told you?" he

asked as the time approached for him to go on with his partner, a girl of twenty.

I looked at him and asked him the same question I had asked the waiter. It disconcerted him, and I saw a look of apprehension come into his eyes.

"But promise me you won't tell," he reiterated.

"Of course I won't tell," I replied, half-testily. "Only don't make confidants of strangers in such a vital matter."

From that time on he shunned me, and I sensed that he regretted having told me of his past. That was just the way I wanted him to feel; though it hurt me to think that he imagined he had made a mistake in my case. And, while this is a true incident, I have purposely injected enough untrue detail to baffle any possibility of his being identified by my telling the occurrence.

At the end of the week I received $250 in gold notes, which I turned over intact to the secretary-treasurer of the prisoners' aid bureau, who gave me a receipt. Also, the receipts of the house for the week exceeded the sum which the manager had mentioned by $56, half of which was also turned into the treasury of the organization.

CHAPTER XXIV

MENTION has already been made of the Mutual Aid and Employment Bureau which was established during the closing weeks of 1911 for the purpose of aiding ex-prisoners to rehabilitate themselves and get back into the ways of honest living. Considerably over $1000 was subscribed by the public as a fund for the bureau, and this was augmented by $278 received by me as remuneration for my engagement at the Empress Theatre. In addition to this, Ed Morrell and myself gave a public lecture at the California Club Hall, the receipts from which were $105, and I appeared at a benefit performance of "The Third Degree" at the Savoy Theatre, which added $202. I had also contributed amounts received by me from various organizations before which I had spoken; so that at the end of the year more than $500 had been contributed to the fund through the personal efforts of Morrell and myself, and during the first three months of 1912 we contributed close to $200 more.

I am not making this statement in self-glorification nor because I want any credit, but because I feel that it is no more than right that I should meet the efforts of a few persons — some of them ministers of Christ's gospel — to discredit me and my motives, by presenting facts which speak far more for themselves than I can speak for them. In addition, not a day passed during the first five months of my freedom that I did not help some one or more men financially, aside from those I sent to the employment bureau; and since that time, even up to the present day, I

have continued to help men in distress; also women. It is embarrassing for me to write about this, but in the light of certain disclosures which have recently been made to me, I deem it essential to the good of the cause for which I stand that these facts be made known. It is not what a man says, but what he does, for a cause that counts most. Religion, in fact, is what a man or woman does, not what they think or say.

Scores of men were placed in positions where they could earn their livings by the Aid Bureau. Hundreds were helped to get meals and a place to sleep. A few were supplied with transportation to their homes, and a number were given necessary clothing. The secretary-treasurer was under salary, and took a keen interest in the work. The bureau is no longer in existence, because the Legislature appropriated a sum of money for the purpose of aiding paroled and discharged prisoners, and that work is now a State agency, as it should be.

Early in January, 1912, I received a letter from Ukiah asking me to speak there. I had received a number of similar requests from various parts of the State, and finally decided to arrange for a tour which would include all of these places and perhaps others. Mr. Morrell had been engaged in making a "derrick" and a straitjacket, the instruments of torture used at Folsom and San Quentin, respectively, and we decided to take them along to illustrate exactly how prisoners were punished in the State prisons. Morrell, as I have already stated, had appeared and spoken from the same platform with me a number of times. He had demonstrated that he was a forceful, even-tempered and convincing speaker, and I realized that he was a valuable unit for the cause of prison betterment. He had spent sixteen years in the State prison, five years of which were in solitary confinement. Subsequently he

had, by sheer force of character, risen to the position of "head trusty," a place which afforded him unequalled opportunity for studying and observing the torture of his fellow prisoners in the dungeons and wards.

Early in January we left San Francisco for Ukiah. While I was waiting at the Ferry building for Morrell to appear a boat came in from Sausalito, and among the passengers was Warden Hoyle of San Quentin. He saw me standing there, nodded and said, "How are you getting along?" as he passed, but did not stop.

On the boat going over to Sausalito we remained on the rear apron. Presently Morrell nudged me and said, "Do you know that fellow over there; the one in the grey suit?"

I looked and saw a youngish-looking fellow, whom I recognized as an ex-prisoner who had served ten years at San Quentin, having been committed there while still a boy. While I was looking he turned and saw us. He did not hesitate, but came straight to us and we shook hands. In reply to a question as to how he was "making out" he straightened up.

"I'm doing fine," he answered. "I'm married and have a boy. They are on board and I'd like to have you meet them; but don't let on about the 'big house.' She doesn't know and I'm always afraid she'll find out."

"Would it make any difference?" I asked.

"Well, I'm not sure," he replied. "I think it would be all right with her, but the trouble is she tells her mother everything, and I know it would be curtains if her mother found out. Wait a minute and I'll go and get them."

He was gone for some time and Morrell and I fell into a discussion of the case.

We both agreed that he was wrong, that he should have told the girl of his past before he married her; that

should his past be disclosed at any time it would be much worse than if he had disclosed it himself, even had such a disclosure lost him the woman whom he loved and who previously loved him.

We were still discussing the matter when he reappeared, leading a curly-headed boy of three or four years by the hand, followed by a slender and pretty young woman, who looked to be anything but a matron.

Introductions followed, and it was very apparent that the ex-prisoner idolized both his son and his wife.

"I have heard of you both so often," she said as the boat neared its dock on the Marin shore. "Fred takes a great interest in the subject, and so do I."

I glanced at "Fred" to see how he took the remark, but his face was imperturbable.

Since that afternoon the scene has reverted to my mind many times and I have often wondered whether the young wife has found out, or if she ever will.

We arrived at Ukiah after dark and went to a hotel for the night. The next morning one of the assistant editors of a local paper called on us and asked if he might take us out to the State Hospital and show us some of the surrounding country. He was a splendid fellow and we gladly accepted the invitation. Soon after leaving town we overtook a rancher who had a bale of hay tied to the back of his buggy.

"That's a good deal like everything else in our false civilization," remarked Morrell. "Just think of a farmer driving into town to buy a bale of hay. I suppose they eat canned chicken and preserved eggs, too."

"Yes, a great many of them do," our companion replied. "I've tried to understand it, but cannot. It seems to me if I lived on a ranch I'd have the ranch products fresh for myself."

The asylum was similar to the one at Napa and we did not remain long.

"We've given you quite a notice in our paper," said our guide, as we started on the return trip. "I wish you'd write an article for us," he added, turning to me.

"I'll be glad to do so," I replied; "I'll write it as soon as we get back. If you'll drive us to the office I'll write it there."

He followed the suggestion and I wrote the article. It appeared in the next issue of the paper.

Just before noon we visited the county jail, where we found a man whom we both knew and who that morning had been sentenced to ten years in San Quentin for stealing cattle. He seemed to take the sentence philosophically, but said he was broke and asked us to leave some money in the office so that he might buy tobacco and "knick-knacks" on the way down. We did so.

CHAPTER XXV

We were scheduled to speak in the only theatre in town at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and also at 7 o'clock in the evening, but at noon the manager sought us out and told us that he thought we would have to speak more than twice, as a great many people had driven into town from the surrounding country and the theatre would only seat 200. It developed that the manager was right, and we spoke four times instead of twice, each time to a full house. The charge was 10 cents, and 50 per cent. of the proceeds went to the manager. The other 50 per cent. was to pay our expenses and for the aid bureau.

At the first evening lecture an amusing incident occurred. I had spoken first and Morrell second. After his talk he announced that the "derrick" and strait-jacket were about to be exhibited, and stated that it would be necessary to have two volunteers from the audience. At the afternoon talks we had experienced some difficulty getting subjects, as we had told of prisoners who had been killed or crippled as a result of the torture, but now he no sooner made the request than a young fellow arose in the audience and came up on the stage. He was not very robust, so Morrell decided to put him in the "derrick," as it was easier to release a victim from that instrument than from the jacket.

In "My Life in Prison" I have told what the jacket is like, but for those who do not know what the "derrick" is I shall try to describe it and how it is used. A piece of two or three inch iron pipe is made secure to the floor

in an upright position, and about eight feet from the base a horizontal piece of similar piping projects three or four feet, similar to the elbow in a stovepipe. At the end of this horizontal projection a strong iron pulley is attached, and through this pulley a half-inch rope or window-cord is strung. At the end of this rope or cord is a pair of handcuffs.

When a man is placed in this machine he is ordered to turn his back to the upright and place his hands behind him. He is handcuffed in that position, and then the rope is pulled so that the victim's hands are raised and his torso forced forward. The pulling upward is continued until the victim's toes are barely touching the floor, and then the rope is made fast to a cross-pin or cleat which is attached to the upright about five feet from the ground.

When the "derrick" was in use at Folsom prison (it was discontinued by Warden Johnston about eighteen months ago and subsequently abolished by act of the Legislature) a man undergoing the torture was kept "triced up" for two hours and a half, and quite often victims were found hanging unconscious when the guard came to "let them down" at the expiration of that period. If the offence had been a "serious" one, the victim was given two hours and a half in a dark cell to "recuperate" and then placed in the "derrick" again for two hours and a half, and so on, until a confession was secured, or the authorities felt that the offender had been "sufficiently punished."

But though we had secured a volunteer for the "derrick" there was no response for the jacket.

"I'd like to get a husky young boy," said Morrell, insinuatingly. "It's important that you should see this demonstration."

Every one was quiet for a moment, and then there was

a slight commotion near the rear of the hall. A little girl about nine years old was making her way toward the aisle and dragging something behind her. It was not until she got clear of the seats and started toward the stage that we saw what the "something" was. It proved to be her little brother, aged three or four, whom she was leading by the hand. At first no one comprehended what it meant, but when the girl stopped at the edge of the platform and said, "Mamma sent Bobbie down," there was a general laugh. Bobby was a "husky young boy," without doubt, and offered no resistance when his sister held him up to be taken. I was disconcerted, but not so Morrell. He placed his hands under the boy's armpits and lifted him to the stage.

"Let's shake hands," he said.

The boy extended his small right hand confidently.

"And now come over and shake hands with my fellow torturer," added Morrell, leading the youngster to me.

This by-play completed, Morrell held up his hand for silence, and the laughing subsided.

"I'm so glad this baby boy was sent up here," he said. "Of course, he is not a subject for the jacket, he's too small, but he'll be big enough some day, and who can tell? It —"

There was a faint scream in the rear of the hall. It was the boy's mother.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, madam," pleaded Morrell. "I really wasn't thinking about you, but about the boy. Of course, he will never go wrong, I didn't mean that; what I meant to say was that some boy just his age will in the future undergo torture in prison unless you voters decree otherwise. You own the State prisons, the wardens don't own them, the board of directors don't own them; *you* own them. If you want this kind of savage

and uncivilized treatment to continue — the kind of treatment we are going to show you — you are not Christian people, but barbarians. The 3000 men and women in the State prisons to-day are in the future going to be replaced by 3000 boys and girls who are now in short trousers and dresses, that's all."

He patted the boy's head and handed him back to his hovering sister.

"And now we want some one to go into the jacket," he continued. "We're not going to hurt any one; we merely want to demonstrate what it is like. Surely there are young men in this audience who have got courage. Some of you girls with escorts nudge them in the ribs."

Almost instantly a half dozen young fellows arose and started for the stage. Each one on seeing that others were volunteering, hastened to get there first, and it developed into a race.

"My, but the girls must be popular in Ukiah," commented Morrell, as three of the youths arrived simultaneously, and clambered to the platform. The others soon followed, until there was a small crowd on the stage.

While Morrell was feeling the muscles and otherwise examining the would-be victims who surrounded him, one of the men stepped over to where I was sitting and said something to me in a low voice. He was a man of about 35, stockily built and apparently in excellent health. What he said to me made me get up out of my chair. It made me realize what is meant by dramatic effect. I walked over to Morrell, drew him to one side and whispered in his ear.

"Good! Fine!" he exclaimed aloud — loud enough for the audience to hear — at the same time turning toward the man and scrutinizing him closely.

"I'm sorry, fellows," he added, addressing the others,

"but we will use this gentleman over here. There will be another lecture after this one, and if any of you wish to remain and volunteer then, you will have the opportunity."

As the disappointed candidates for torture jumped down from the stage to resume their seats they were greeted with applause.

Morrell then stepped over to the volunteer and asked him if his heart was all right.

"As far as I know it is," was the response. "I've never had any trouble with it."

Notwithstanding this answer Morrell applied his ear to the man's thorax, and held it there for half a minute.

"It sounds all right," he said. "In the penitentiary when a prisoner is going into the jacket the prison physician tests his heart with a stethoscope. A man with a weak heart might be killed, you know.

"We haven't got a stethoscope, but we ought to have one. I don't want a charge of manslaughter against us if I can help it. You voluntarily, and of your own free will, agree to be laced in the jacket, and absolve us from blame for injury or fatal results?"

"Sure," was the prompt reply; "I want to go in, I want to know what it is like. I certainly should want to know after my experience."

As Morrell picked up the jacket and prepared to use it the audience seemed breathless. It was apparent that there was mystery surrounding the man who was to be the victim.

CHAPTER XXVI

After Morrell had placed the jacket on the subject and had partly laced it, he seized the man with a quick movement, in which he used his knee as a support, laid him on the floor of the stage, face down. Then he began at the top and pulled the lace taut, down to the victim's knees, after which he rolled him over on his back and left him lying there. It occurred to me that the man should have something under his head, so I stepped to a corner and got a piece of canvas scenery that was lying there. Returning, I lifted the man's head from the floor and placed the cloth under it.

"No, no," shouted Morrell, who was just about to "trice up" the other volunteer in the "derrick"; "don't try to make him comfortable; you can't. Let him have the real thing."

I made no reply, but withdrew the cloth and returned to my seat. The young fellow standing under the derrick was already handcuffed, and an instant later the rope was pulled up and fastened. I took out my watch and looked at the time as Morrell stepped to the front of the stage and told what he knew, what he had seen, regarding the form of torture which was being demonstrated. As he talked I looked at the faces before him to see what effect the object-lesson was having. In the place of the laughs of a few moments before I saw nothing save intense interest, and horror.

Presently a lady sitting well to the front in the audience caught my eye and motioned toward the "derrick."

I looked over and saw that the victim's hands had already turned purple and that his face was very red. Morrell had observed the signal also, and turned as I got to my feet and asked the young fellow if he wanted to be let down.

"How long has he been in?" asked Morrell.

"Four and a half minutes," I replied, consulting my watch.

"Can you stand another minute?" inquired Morrell, going to the helpless figure.

"Y-y-yes, I guess so," came the suffering response.

"Let him down," said Morrell, turning away and going to the man in the jacket.

I did as directed and removed the handcuffs, noticing as I did so that the steel had bitten into the flesh at the back of the wrists.

"Well, how are you making it?" asked Morrell, placing his hand on the forehead of the other subject.

"It's pretty hot," was the reply.

"Would you like to come out?"

"Yes, I guess I would; I think I've had enough."

"Well, I know it's pretty tough on a fleshy man," commented Morrell; "much tougher than it is on a thin one. But you haven't confessed. Are you ready to confess, or shall I take a few extra cinches to make it hotter?"

The man's face was very red and drops of perspiration were standing on his forehead.

"Confess to what?" he asked, trying to laugh.

"Oh, you know; don't pull any of that stuff on me," said Morrell. "When you're ready to 'come through,' just yelp."

He turned and resumed his talk.

Ten minutes passed and then the man in the jacket "yelped."

"Hah, hah!" exclaimed Morrell, breaking off his discourse; "now we get the confession."

He stepped over and peered into the victim's face. The man was breathing stertorously and rolling his head slightly from side to side.

"Let me out," he said, hoarsely.

"But the confession?" asked Morrell. "How about the confession?"

He asked this in the same tone of voice he had often heard used in the dungeon at San Quentin, and the scene was very realistic. It made me feel uneasy; almost distressed. I felt that the demonstration was being carried too far; nor was I wrong.

"Take him out! Take him out!" came cries from the audience.

Morrell wheeled like a flash.

"Are you people willing to pardon him? He stole some onions from the kitchen and took them to his cell; a heinous offence. Do you pardon him?"

"Yes, yes! Take him out!" came the cry.

I jumped up and helped Morrell untie and unlace the rope. As the jacket loosened the victim took several long breaths, and when it was entirely removed got to his feet unsteadily and sat down in a near-by chair, rubbing his hands together. The expression on his face was ludicrous, and some of the people in the audience laughed.

"Would you mind telling how it felt?" asked Morrell, turning to the young man who had been in the "derrick" and who had remained on the stage, silently watching what had transpired since he had been "let down."

"I can't talk," he answered, abashed. "It hurt bad. I couldn't stand any more of it."

"Well, don't step out of line again or you'll get a worse dose," he was admonished as he left the stage.

"And you?" inquired Morrell, turning to the other victim. "Will you tell the audience how it felt?"

"You bet I will," was the vigorous response.

The man arose and stepped to the edge of the platform. Silence prevailed as he began speaking.

"If ever a man was thoroughly ashamed of himself I'm the man," he declared. "For five years I was a guard at Folsom prison, and many's the man I've 'triced up' in the 'derrick' or 'cinched' in the jacket. At first it used to bother me, but I soon got used to it. I got so used to it that I could stand by and hear men screaming and shrieking for mercy and laugh. Just think of that! I could laugh at the agony of a fellow creature.

"I came here to-night more out of curiosity than anything else. I was in a bad frame of mind regarding these two men you have heard speak. I was against them. I thought they had an awful nerve to be speaking before the public. But when Mr. Morrell got that baby in his arms and said that it might some day be tortured that got me. Since I quit the prison job I've been married and I've got children of my own, as a good many of you know. All I can say is that I never realized what a terrible thing the jacket is; and, if they'll let me, I'll go into the derrick, too. I've seen men lay in the jacket for forty-eight hours at a time without being taken out; yes, and longer than that. It was before they regulated the time to six hours. Being a prison guard made me a hard man, I guess. I never was cruel in my life before that; I never would beat a horse or anything of that kind. And it's taken me a good while to get back where I was before I went to work at Folsom. What I have experienced to-night is the finishing touch. It makes me feel sorry for guards, because they get hard in character without knowing it. For one I'm going to do all I can to have this

thing brought before the next Legislature. Torture ought to be done away with. If it hardens the guards what must it do to the prisoners who suffer it? I hope these two men will go all over California, all over the United States, all over the world, and I wish I could go with them."

While the audience applauded he turned and shook hands with both of us and then returned to his seat.

To those who dubbed the incipient movement for prison improvement "sentimental twaddle," "maudlin hysteria," "lackadaisical neurasthenia" and other lexicographical sciomachies, and to those who still fling caustic criticisms, be it known that the discipline at Folsom prison improved from the day Warden Johnston discontinued torture, and it has improved at San Quentin since the passage of the legislative act prohibiting torture. The old system was given a long trial and failed. In the heyday of San Quentin's and Folsom's chambers of horrors those chambers were full of victims whose screams struck no terror to the hearts of the other prisoners. Instead, the prisons were smoldering volcanoes of hate and violence. Murderous attacks and killings were of weekly occurrence and the men seemed to glory in breaking the rules. This is a matter of record, not "twaddle." It is not only a matter of record, but a matter of personal experience on the part of the writer.

To-day the California prisoners are different, the spirit of the men behind the walls is hopeful and the percentage of assaults has dwindled to almost nil. Without question this is due solely to erstwhile "maudlin hysteria." Furthermore, there is need for continued "hysteria." It should be continued until the prisons become assets, ethical as well as economic and until prisoners are turned out men, not devitalized dummies or maleficent monsters.

CHAPTER XXVII

It was after 11 o'clock when we finished at the theatre that night, and on returning to the hotel I went to my room to do some writing. I had been at work about half an hour when I was disturbed by a knock on my door and in response to my "come in" Morrell entered.

"Will you come down to the lobby for a minute?" he asked. "There are a couple of men down there would like to meet you. They heard our talk and want to shake hands."

"I don't want to go down, Ed," I replied. "I want to finish this story to-night if I can."

"Oh, come on," he urged. "You're going to get yourself in bad by refusing to meet people. They want to see you and they'll remember our talk a good deal longer if they get the personal touch from both of us. Come on."

"All right," I assented, "but I'll only stay a minute."

When we got to the lobby there was no one there.

"Where did those gentlemen go that I was talking with?" Morrell asked the clerk.

"They just stepped in to the bar," was the reply.

My mind was still on the story I had been writing, and I followed Morrell into the barroom unthinkingly. It was not until I saw the array of bottles and the mirrors and the white-aproned bartender that I suddenly remembered the conditions of my parole and started to go back. But it was too late. Morrell was already introducing me to the nearest man. Other introductions followed, and I found that the two men to whom Morrell had been talking

had met friends of theirs in the barroom. We were accorded a lot of commendation, and then some one suggested, "Let's have a drink."

When the bartender got to me I asked for sarsaparilla, and he opened a bottle and filled my glass. It took some time for him to fill all the orders, and there was a general conversation in progress. Finally the man who had ordered the drinks said:

"Well, here's luck, boys; drink hearty." And raised his glass to his lips.

But he did not drink. Instead he set the glass down on the bar and said:

"For the love of Mike, what's that stuff in your glass, Lowrie?"

"Sarsaparilla," I informed him.

"Well, throw it away. You can't drink sarsaparilla with me. I'm not spending my money for that kind of slop. Take a man's drink." He turned to the bartender. "Give him some whisky, Mike."

"Mike" set the bottle and glasses before me, while "yes" and "no" played tag through my mind. It was a crucial moment, more so than I realized. A glance at the man as he talked to me had revealed that he was not himself. He was not intoxicated, but he had taken too many drinks. The tone of his voice had been belligerent and his eyes had narrowed. I didn't want a drink. I had no desire for it, and I knew it would be hazardous if I swallowed the stuff. There were seven or eight persons present, all of whom might be called as witnesses against me should my parole be revoked. On the other hand, should I refuse the whisky there was the possibility of loud words, even a rumpus. I did not fear the rumpus, because no man can make me take a drink if I don't want to do it, but it flashed on me that in such an event a great

deal of attention might be attracted to the scene, and there might be arrests. Of the two evils I chose what seemed to be the lesser, and poured out a small drink.

The glasses were no sooner back on the bar than some one else repeated the invitation. I drank again.

The thing was repeated, and repeated again and again. All the time a conversation was being carried on between Morrell and myself on one side and the crowd on the other. And all the time I was figuring how I could withdraw without giving offence. Finally I said: "Well, I'm going to bed; I've got to get up early to-morrow. Have something on me before I go."

The drink was served and I started for the door.

"Hold on a minute," came the protest; "your partner's treating. You're not going to give him the go-by, are you?"

I turned back and had another drink, and then, amid regrets and repeated invitations to "have just one more," I again started for the door.

At this juncture the bartender broke silence.

"It's my treat, fellows," he said, "and everybody's got to get in." He waved to me. "Come on back here and get a night-cap."

"Yes, come on," said the chorus; "one more won't hurt you."

We all drank again, and then I managed to escape. As I stepped from the barroom into the lobby of the hotel I suddenly became conscious that my brain was not normal; it seemed to be hovering over the top of my head instead of inside, and I half shrank from passing the desk for fear the clerk might think I was intoxicated. Of course, I was intoxicated, in degree, but told myself that I was simply feeling queer.

As I passed the desk I glanced at the clerk, but he did

not even look up. "A fine fellow," I thought. "He's got good sense."

Upstairs in the hallway I went to the wrong door, and did not discover the fact until it refused to yield to my hand and a voice from within the room asked: "What do you want?"

When I got to my own room I found the lights still burning, and my manuscript scattered just as I had left it.

"I feel fine," I said to myself, talking out loud. "I'm going to write all night. I'll turn out something that will make people sit up and take notice."

But I had not been seated at the table more than five minutes before the pencil dropped from my fingers and I began to lose consciousness. I forced myself to get up and undress, and then crawled into bed.

When I awoke next morning some one was rapping at my door, and on getting up and opening it I was confronted by Morrell.

"Come in," I invited. "What time is it?"

"It's nearly train time," he replied. "You'll have to hustle."

While I was dressing we discussed what had happened the night before.

"It must never happen again," he declared. "You've got too much at stake, and the damned stuff is no good anyway. The best thing to do is to forget it. It's past, and it can't be helped."

Going down on the train to Healdsburg, where we were to speak that night, we talked about the event again.

"Just think, if some of the opposition got hold of it," said Morrell, "they'd make us out the worst kind of hypocrites; they'd kill our cause; they'd turn everybody against us."

"But that's just the trouble," I objected. "People shouldn't turn against the cause because of anything you or I may do. The cause is bigger than both of us — it's bigger than any man or any group of men. I don't say that to palliate last night," I added, "but because I feel that it is true. No more such introductions for me. I know that the public in general is unthinking, and easily confuses a human being with a movement for good, and that should it be known that either of us took a drink it would hurt the movement."

"Not only that," he replied, "but an ex-prisoner is supposed to manifest to a higher degree than the ordinary man. Let the ordinary man go into a saloon for a drink and scarcely anybody gives it a thought; even let him get drunk, and not much is thought of it. But if an ex-prisoner goes into a saloon, even after he is free, even though he isn't on parole, people wag their heads and predict his early return to prison. Of course, it is better that the ex-prisoner should not take a drink, nor go into a saloon, the same as it is better for every man, but the fact remains that you and I are expected to be paragons of virtue, and we've got to live up to that expectation so long as we are identified with this work."

CHAPTER XXVIII

It was afternoon when we arrived at Healdsburg, and on going to the theatre, where we were to speak that night, we learned that our coming had not been advertised, nor had it been given any mention in the local papers. The manager of the theatre had a notice posted at the entrance of the place, but it was small and not well worded.

"'We want to reach as many people as possible," said Morrell. "Isn't there some way to get publicity this afternoon?"

"It might be done with hand-bills," suggested the manager, "but I don't feel like going to the expense."

"Will you pay half of it?" asked Morrell.

"Yes, I'll do that," was the reply.

On the strength of this agreement we lost no time in hunting up a job printing establishment, where it devolved upon me to write the text for the proposed hand-bills. We ordered 1000 copies and hired several small boys to distribute them so soon as they should be ready.

Notwithstanding this move, we had a poor house that night, though we both exerted ourselves to the same extent as we would have had the theatre been filled. After it was over a number of persons came up to the stage and wanted to know if we were to speak the next night, as they were desirous of telling friends so that they might come and hear us also. There were so many of these requests that we decided to remain for a second night, and we ordered new hand-bills printed announcing it.

The next morning I was called to the telephone just after breakfast, and was asked if Mr. Morrell and myself would speak at the high school at 11 o'clock. Before giving a definite answer I consulted with Morrell. I was willing to appear myself, but did not feel that I should commit him without his consent.

"Why, of course," he agreed; "I'd rather speak to students than to grown-ups. Tell them yes."

In the high school at 11 o'clock we were met by the principal and conducted to the auditorium, where we found the students — boys and girls — already assembled. An interesting hour ensued, the pupils asking many questions. The questions were not puerile, nor were they born of mere curiosity; instead, they indicated that the questioners were seeking information of the right kind. One boy wanted to know if torture ever made a man better. Another asked if it would be feasible to have prison autonomies.

That night the theatre was crowded and we were plied with more questions. It was evident that the students had gone to their respective homes and talked about what they had heard in the morning. Also, a number of the students were on hand to witness the application of the jacket and "derrick."

From Healdsburg we went to Santa Rosa, where we paid $40 for the use of a hall. A crowd sufficiently large to cover this and other expenses came to hear us, and a number of prominent business and professional men, including a judge, were in the audience. The following afternoon we spoke before one of the local women's organizations without compensation, and then went to Sebastopol, where we were scheduled to speak in the public hall, but under the auspices of the women's club for civic betterment.

We arrived at Sebastopol five minutes before the hour which had been advertised for our appearance, and it was pitch dark. It had been raining. On arriving at the hall we found it filled, and the audience already impatient. To erect the "derrick" and make other preparations would require ten to fifteen minutes, so I stepped before the curtain and made an announcement to that effect.

Back of the scenes again I found Morrell, with his coat off, screwing the "derrick" together. In order to get the instrument about the country we had been obliged to have it made in sections, and it required some time to put it together.

"I haven't got a hammer, and one of the guy wires is broken," he said. "Will you run down town and see if you can get some wire, and borrow a hammer? And if you see anybody outside tell them to come in and help me."

"Down town" meant a block and a half, and I lost no time in starting. I hurried to the stage door, opened it, stepped out, and — found myself dropping through space. I didn't know where I was going nor how far, and I believed all was over. As I fell my whole life seemed to flash through my mind.

In the midst of this autobiographic panorama I was violently interrupted by arriving at my destination — a large mud-puddle. I struck on my hands and knees and rolled over into the mess before I could recover myself. The sudden stop jarred me considerably and I was still in a recumbent position, venting ungentlemanly remarks into the darkness when the stage door opened and I heard Morrell's voice. He was talking to some one inside, and said: "I forgot to tell him. I'll have to go down myself."

"Look out!" I shouted, but too late. He stepped out just as I had done, and came down. He not only came

down, but he landed on me, crunching me into the mud several inches deeper than I had been.

He lost no time in opening his mouth and pouring forth a volley of expletives, the virility of which made mine seem like — well, like a paternoster.

Suddenly he became conscious that he was not alone.

"Who is this?" he asked.

"It's me," I answered, fervidly ungrammatical, "that is, me plus an incrustation of real estate."

"And where are we?" he inquired in an aggrieved tone.

"I'm not sure whether it's South Sebastopol or Mud Flat," I answered lugubriously, "but if you'll take your knees out of my stomach I might stand a chance of getting out of this alive."

He scrambled to his feet, but in doing so inadvertently placed a muddy hand in my face. As I was getting up he struck a match.

The light revealed a stairway running down against the face of the building from the stage door, with a small landing at the top, but no railing. Had we turned to the left on coming out we would have descended the stairs, but, emerging from the lighted stage to the darkness of the night, and in a hurry, we had both stepped off the landing.

Gropingly we made our way up the stairs and opened the door. Two young men were busily at work erecting the "derrick," but when we entered they stopped aghast. Had two professional comedians entered the place they couldn't have created more amazement.

"Hurry up with the 'derrick,'" said Morrell. "Is there a place here to wash?"

"And who are you?" asked the nearest man, approaching us with a hammer in his hand.

"I'm Morrell," was the retort. "Don't delay the

game, the people are already nervous from waiting. We fell in the mud, fell, off the stoop. Where's the place to wash?"

Still amazed, the youth with the hammer directed us to a corner, where we cleaned ourselves as best we could. Of course it was impossible to get the mud off our clothing, and my white collar looked as if it had been delivered from a colliery instead of from a laundry.

Ten minutes later, however, I was standing in the glare of the footlights and speaking as if nothing had happened. But in the midst of my address the situation in the mud-puddle reverted to my mind and I started to laugh — I couldn't help it. I don't know what the audience thought, but they laughed, too.

As if to complete a night of comedy, an amusing incident occurred later in the evening. Morrell had finished speaking, and had secured two volunteers for the torture, and was descanting on the horror of the "derrick," when the audience suddenly burst into a roar of laughter.

Shocked and hurt, Morrell stood with clenched fists, waiting for the audience to become quiet. It was some time before the laughter subsided, and then, though interrupted by seemingly irrepressible titters and giggles, he resumed.

"I don't know what you're laughing at, I'm sure, but I —"

Again the audience laughed, even more spontaneously than the first time.

"Please listen to me," said Morrell, visibly annoyed. "It's beyond my comprehension how you can laugh at the torture of a fellow creature. In the old days people used to assemble to see warm blood gashed from tender women's bodies by wild beasts, but though they enjoyed it, though it was made a holiday occasion, with peanuts and red

lemonade, for all I know, I don't believed they laughed. To-day such a spectacle would inspire horror, and yet it would seem that human nature has not changed much.

"Look at this young man hanging in agony by his wrists. He is a human being, your brother and mine. Look at him, I say, and laugh if you dare."

Morrell turned with a dramatic gesture to point at the youth in the "derrick," but his hand dropped to his side. He stood staring incredulously for a moment and then burst out laughing himself. The audience was laughing almost hysterically.

Instead of seeing the victim hanging by his wrists, as he had expected to see, Morrell found himself staring at a man standing on a chair, the rope slack and his hands hanging loosely behind his back. After being "triced up," and while Morrell had been speaking, the victim had spied a chair which had been inadvertently left standing close by, and had stepped up on it.

When the noise finally died away Morrell tried to apologize, but the audience wouldn't listen — they kept applauding until the curtain went down.

CHAPTER XXIX

SEBASTOPOL, we learned, was the centre of an extensive apple-growing district, and before we left that night we were given some of the luscious fruit to take with us. A fast electric car conveyed us to Petaluma, but it was after midnight when we arrived. Before retiring at the hotel we went down to the office of the morning newspaper to see if we could get a reading notice inserted announcing our appearance the next night, and we found the editor in charge sympathetic with our cause. He not only accepted the notice, but sat and talked with us for an hour or more, telling us a great deal about the prisons in his native country — Australia. According to his description, San Quentin was a paradise compared to some prisons in the antipodes. He told us of having seen men flogged into insensibility and many other sanguinary outrages.

Early the next morning we were out to see the town. The chief industry in the country surrounding Petaluma is poultry raising, and we were much interested at what we saw in one of the egg packing and refrigerating plants, particularly the "candling" process. I had heard of egg candling, but had not known what it meant. Three men were sitting before a long shelf, each with a shade shadowing his eyes. Before each man there was a strong electric light (the candle) hooded save for an opening in front the size of a hen's egg. To the left of each man were boxes of eggs and to the right a number of compartments. They were taking the eggs from the boxes,

one at a time, twisting them deftly before the lighted aperture and then placing them in the compartments.

On making inquiries we learned that by holding the eggs before the light their quality and freshness was determined. Eggs through which the light did not penetrate were cast aside as bad. Eggs which showed streaks or dark spots (blood) were deposited in one compartment along with the deformed product, while eggs that showed clear were placed in the number one section to be graded according to size.

"What is done with the streaked and deformed eggs?" I asked the man who was showing us the plant.

"They're sold to bakers and restaurants at a reduced rate for cake and confection," he replied. "Blood streaks don't hurt an egg; it's just as good as the others, but people don't like the looks if they are served that way. Mixed up in a batch of cake batter it don't make any difference, see?"

"May I take a couple of these eggs?" asked Morrell, stepping to the compartments.

"Sure. Help yourself," he was told.

My curiosity was aroused when he selected two eggs, a large, extra white one, and one of dark color that was abnormally small, but I refrained from questioning him. He placed them in his side coat pocket, and, after thanking our guide, we passed out.

I had heard that there was a silk mill and a shoe factory in the city, and inquired the way from an old man whom we met tottering along the street, and who looked as if he might have founded the place. He had deep-set grey eyes and a patriarchal white beard. He proved to be a pleasant old gentleman, though loquacious, and consumed half an hour in telling us how to get to the factories. Morrell called him "grand-pa," and it pleased

him. It pleased him so much that he told us the names of his grandchildren, where they lived, and what they had accomplished in life. He was branching off into the biographies of second cousins when Morrell looked at his watch and exclaimed, "We've got to hurry if we want to see the factories and get back in time for the high school talk. We'll have to go." He stooped and picked up the cane which the old man had dropped in the excitement of talking and handed it to him.

"Quite a character," he remarked as we passed on. "Quite a character. I'll bet he's got a lot of interesting stuff in that old white head."

"No doubt of it," I agreed, "but did you notice how he talked with his hands. Tie his hands and I wager he couldn't say ten consecutive words with any degree of intelligence."

"Yes," replied Morrell, "and did you grasp the fact that he measured the success of his children and grandchildren by the amount of money they had accumulated. He's nearing the grave, and yet to him success in life means possession of money."

"The fact that he talks with his hands would indicate that," I replied. "No artist or idealist uses his hands in talking, save on the stage. I wonder what he would have done if he had learned that we were ex-convicts."

"Dropped dead, I guess," opined Morrell grimly.

We continued discussing the old man until we arrived at the shoe factory on the outskirts of the city, where we spent half an hour inspecting the various stages in the making of human foot gear. Most of the employees were men, and the factory was well lighted and ventilated. It occurred to me that the country was an ideal place for factories, so far as fresh air, light and sunshine were concerned.

The silk mill, which was only a few hundred feet from the shoe factory, proved the more interesting. Nearly all the employees there were girls, many of them under sixteen. I remember one girl in particular, a frail little thing, with her dark hair down her back. She was working in a small room by herself, operating what looked like a spinning frame. For some reason the room had to be kept hot, and the silk fibre filled the atmosphere. Going into that room was almost like going into a Turkish bath. The girl's hair was wet at the temples and over the ears, and her face was damp and drawn. She scarcely looked at us — just one swift glance — so intent was she on the work before her, darting from place to place in order to keep all the threads running without a break. As I watched her I thought of the stories I had heard about the "terrible jute mill" at San Quentin. During the time I worked in the jute mill I had never seen a man work anywhere near as hard as this slight girl was working; I had never seen a man who looked so worn and tired as she looked. I tried to learn from our guide what her wages were, but he professed not to know.

Writing of the jute mill, I must add that while it is not a "terrible" place, it nevertheless has its tragic side. The man or woman, or the boy or girl who works in a factory outside has at least some degree of choice, and, if fitted, may get some other kind of work to do, while the men committed to San Quentin are assigned to the jute mill indiscriminately. I have seen many a good pick and shovel man ruined for that kind of work by being compelled to work in the jute mill at San Quentin, where his muscles got flabby and his energy stagnant. I have also seen men totally unfit by temperament for such work who were made to operate a loom. To a nervous person, or to one with poor eyesight, that kind of work is fatal.

I have seen men go insane from being compelled to perform tasks against which they instinctively rebelled. In "My Life in Prison" I told of one such case — the case of the little Englishman who entered the prison in good health, but became a raving maniac in a few months, due entirely to working on a loom. Had he been put to work shovelling dirt, the possibilities are that he would be alive to-day. Another haunting case was that of a man named Cotter, who worked on the loom next to mine in 1902. Cotter was the partner of "Panther Jack," who, according to inside information, was fed on ground glass by one of the other prisoners when he worked in the dining-room. "Panther Jack" has the reputation of being a stool-pigeon, and the ground glass method was employed to eliminate him. But that is another story, and besides, Jack is dead.

It must not be inferred from this reference to his partner that Cotter was a stool-pigeon, however, because he wasn't. He was serving twenty years, and had consumption. At the time he worked alongside of me the disease had not progressed very far, but far enough to make existence utterly miserable. Each afternoon he would have a temperature, with perspiration on his forehead. He was a tall man, very emaciated, and of melancholy appearance. All he could get from the prison physician was physic.

For many months I watched him grow weaker and thinner, until I found myself trying to avoid looking at him. One day as we were coming back from dinner he seized me by the arm and said:

"I'm through. No more jute-mill for me. You'll see this afternoon." Of course, the remark impressed me at the time, but in the intensity of my work, trying to get my task done so as to "make the first line," I forgot it.

About half past one something impelled me to look toward Cotter's loom. He had not called, nor made a sound; and yet I knew that I must look.

He was facing me with his right hand held up before him, and it was covered with blood. His face was contorted into a ghastly grin. I rushed to him, but he waved me back.

"It's all right; only one finger," he said, and started for the superintendent's office to get "passed" to the hospital. I followed with his cap and coat, and was present in the hospital when his right forefinger was amputated at the second joint. To the surgeon's inquiry he stated that the finger had been "accidentally caught in the cogs." But I knew differently; I knew that he had deliberately placed his finger where it would be crushed to a mass of splintered bone and flattened flesh.

Cotter did not come back to the jute mill. While undergoing treatment for the severed finger the doctor "discovered" that the patient had tuberculosis. Some years later when I was in the hospital myself Cotter occupied the next cot to mine. He was dying. His relatives, however, managed to secure a pardon for him before the end, and the automobile which conveyed him from San Quentin was the first automobile ever seen inside the walls, and was an object of intense interest to many of the old "lifers." Cotter died within a month after his "release." I have changed his name slightly, but not the facts.

Furthermore, the man working in the jute mill at San Quentin realizes that he is learning something which will be of no use to him in free life. There is but one jute mill in the United States, outside of prisons, and girls are employed in it — at girls' wages of course. The ex-prisoner cannot hope to usurp the place of a girl in order to exist, and, having worked at a girl's task in prison, his

muscles are not fit for hard manual labor. Regarded from this standpoint, the San Quentin jute mill is "terrible"—terrible in its ultimate consequences. But so far as the physical conditions are concerned, or the work, as work, is considered, it is no worse, and perhaps better, than many of the cotton and other textile mills of New England and the Southern States.

That afternoon we spoke to the pupils in the auditorium of the high school, and, as was so often the case where Morrell was present with me, an amusing incident took place.

CHAPTER XXX

THE students at Petaluma were excellent listeners, scarcely a sound breaking against us while we spoke. As Morrell neared the close of his address he referred to the poultry and egg industry of the district and asked how many of the pupils had visited the egg-packing plants. Very few had done so, and I could not help but remember what I had so often heard: that people seldom see the vital and interesting things at their own doors.

"Well, we visited a packing-house this morning," said Morrell, "and what struck me more forcibly than anything else was the development in the size of hens' eggs. I picked up a small egg and was informed that it represented the standard size a few years ago, and then I took one of the regular-sized ones also. The comparison goes to show what perseverance will do, and the same thing applies to every one of you. You can develop; you can become big men and women in the world, and I feel sure that many of you are going to do so. By 'big' men and women I don't mean rich men and women, nor do I mean men and women belonging to society's exclusive sets, but men and women with a broader vision, a keener and more sympathetic insight, a passion for industrial justice, a helping hand rather than a cuff for the weak and erring, and a mother and father love that will include every one. Just the other day Mr. Lowrie and myself saw a drunken man lying in a city gutter. Men and women passed by with smiles of derision and looks of contempt. Small boys hovered around, scenting excitement when a policeman

should happen along. Presently a well-dressed man with iron-grey hair came by, and when he saw the senseless form in the gutter he stopped. Without hesitation he stepped to the curb and knelt beside the helpless figure. With his clean white handkerchief he wiped the dirt from the man's face, secured his hat and got him to his feet. The last we saw of them the well-dressed man with the iron-grey hair had his arm around the drunken man's shoulders, his hand supporting him under the armpit. We wanted to follow and see where they went to, but we were due to catch a train.

"Now, how many men would do what the iron-grey man did? And yet he did only what Christ would have done. I wonder how many ministers of the gospel would have done it? The man with the iron-grey hair was the kind of man I mean when I say a 'big' man. One man like that is worth more to humanity than all the millionaires on earth. Everybody who witnessed the scene was made better. The spectators stopped grinning, and the small boys walked away soberly. Yet the iron-grey man did not utter one word.

"I know a woman who is equally noble. Every day of her life she does noble things that very few persons ever hear about. She is loved by all who know her. To be loved by all who know you is the greatest thing in the world. Nearly every one can be admired, or even envied, respected or condemned, as the case may be, but to be loved — ah! that is the acme of human attainment.

"To me the two eggs conveyed a big lesson, and I'm going to show them to you so that you may see for yourselves. Here they are."

Morrell put his hand into his coat pocket, felt there a moment, and then a look of consternation came over his face.

"No, I guess I won't show them to you after all," he said, withdrawing his hand and cleansing it on his handkerchief. "We helped move the piano to the end of the rostrum just before you assembled, and — well, accidents will happen, even in Petaluma."

Of course the situation brought a laugh, and everybody left the hall in good humor, that is, everybody save Morrell.

That afternoon we visited the local "lock-up" and were shown where an insane man had recently broken out of a cell and climbed to the top, where he had lain in wait with an iron bar to kill the keeper. We were also shown the photograph of a man who had recently visited the city, bought a handsome toilet set at each jewelry store in town, and had disappeared. He had paid for the toilet sets with checks, receiving $18 or $20 change in each case, and these checks had proved to be worthless.

"He worked the same stunt in Santa Rosa," said the chief of police, "and we have information that he is bound for Ukiah, or thereabouts; do you know him?"

We both knew the man very well; he was an expert stone mason, and had done a lot of artistic stone work around the approaches at San Quentin.

Morrell remained silent, but I said: "His face looks familiar."

"You both ought to know him," remarked the chief, "he did three jolts down there; that's where I got the photograph."

A few weeks later we learned that the man had been apprehended in Stockton, or one of the interior cities, and sent back to San Quentin for a long term of years. The question that arose in my mind was: Will he not do the same thing when he gets out again? Three terms had not cured him, why should a fourth term accomplish it?

We also saw a photograph and description, and the offer of a reward for the capture of Jack Black, who had made a spectacular escape from the San Francisco county jail a few nights before. We both knew Black well, and were greatly interested. Since that time I have met Black and shall have more to tell about him later.

At the theatre that night a large crowd assembled to hear us and to see the demonstration, and when we returned to San Francisco the next morning we felt that our time had not been wasted. We had been well received in every instance, and none of the questions which we had been asked indicated anything save a friendly spirit.

One of the first problems to confront me on arriving in San Francisco was the settlement of a number of accounts against the partnership which I had entered into with the father of the family with which I had formerly lived in Berkeley. During the time we had maintained the public stenographer's office I had settled most of the bills without sharing in the proceeds of the business. I was getting a salary for my newspaper work, and my partner had a family to support. But his ideas and mine were greatly at variance concerning the conduct of the office. He would not accept small jobs, but preferred to remain idle day after day in the expectation of getting big orders. This attitude on his part was fatal to our success, and the time finally came when I decided to withdraw, he having secured some court work which necessitated his absence from the office, and I being too deeply engaged in duties which had devolved upon me as the result of "My Life in Prison." Soon after I withdrew he gave up the office and got desk room in another locality. I thought all obligations had been settled, but found they had not been, and a number of firms sent their representatives to me with bills. I was obliged to pay these bills in instalments,

and managed to liquidate all of them. But this was not all. One day I received a letter stating that my partner had cashed a fictitious check, and that criminal proceedings would be brought against him were the check not settled. It was settled, but another case of the same kind cropped up within a week, and then another and another. I visited some of the firms against whom the checks had been cashed and managed to talk them out of the idea of prosecution. I was thinking of the little children and the wife. My acquaintance with him had gradually revealed the fact that he was very extravagant; also, that he expended from 50 cents to $1 each day for cigars and drinks. I knew that he was in a worried state of mind, and I could, in a measure, understand his lapses, but when he remained away from home one night, and I, at the solicitation of his wife, spent the time until morning searching for him in San Francisco — at the Emergency Hospital, the morgue, police headquarters and other depressing places — I began to lose faith; especially when a mutual friend whom I had impressed into the search discovered the next day that the missing one had passed the night in a questionable resort. Of course, his wife never learned this. When he returned home late that evening he told her he had been suddenly called to Sacramento on business, and had entrusted a friend to telephone her. He pretended great surprise when he learned that the telephone message had not been transmitted, and even went so far as to threaten dire vengeance against his careless "friend." He did not know that I knew the truth, and though I am rather ashamed to confess it, I deliberately egged him on in his pseudo fury by such remarks as, "He ought to be ashamed of himself," "He ought to be taught a good lesson," etc.

Another course of action on his part that I thought

wrong was the fact that he would not send the children to school. Many times I urged him to do so, but he always made the same objection.

"How am I to know when some other child may learn of my imprisonment and throw it up to my children?" he would ask. "Rather than have them find out I'll teach them myself. It might be different were I in another State, far away from San Quentin, but as it is, I will not take the chance."

One day I received a letter from his wife asking me to come over to Berkeley to see her, as she was in trouble. I went over that afternoon and found that he had gone to Southern California, and that there was no food in the house; that credit at the tradesmen's was exhausted, and that the children were hungry. I gave her sufficient money from the funds of the Aid Bureau to insure food for a week and also pay the rent. He had written that he expected to get a position in the South, and would soon send for them. A few days later he wrote asking them to come, but did not send sufficient money, and the amount was given her from the fund. Several months passed, and I heard nothing of them, and then one day I learned that he was in jail for passing bad checks and had been sentenced to a long term at San Quentin.

A few days later I received a letter from his wife, in which she stated that she was going back to her home with the children, but did not have the money, and asking if I could possibly arrange to send it. This was done, and she carried out her plan. He was taken to San Quentin and is there to-day.

I don't want any one to get the impression that I am self-righteously condemning him. He had a particular form of weakness and he is paying the penalty. Besides, had he been allowed to go to his family when he was

paroled, instead of being obliged to bring them out here at great expense, thus going into debt, he might have been successful. The stupid system was at least partly to blame.

CHAPTER XXXI

Our trip through the northern part of the State revealed to us a number of important facts about lecturing, the principal one being that advertising in advance was essential if we did not expect to speak to empty seats. But when Morrell suggested that we order 5000 "one-sheets" and 1000 "quarter-cards" I objected. To me it seemed too much like commercializing the cause, or rather invoking the accusation of commercializing it. Of course, under the present commercial system of living, I was at fault to object, even had we been swayed by commercial motives. If a man got into the wilds of an unexplored country, or if he spend ten years in a coal mine and subsequently write his experience and observation, or lecture about it, he is entitled to remuneration. His knowledge has been gleaned from fields of hardship, and it may be, in fact it usually is, of value to the rest of humanity. Even if he got into the wilds or into the coal mine against his will, the same condition would hold true. But neither Morrell nor myself had an idea of making money by that method for ourselves. Morrell had been working quietly for a number of years interesting people in the fact that the prison system was a waste, that it was exorbitant, that it could be improved upon so that it would become an asset rather than a liability of society, and we were both looking forward to coming legislatures in the hope that the first steps might be taken toward that end. We felt that the more people we could reach and interest, the more rapid would be the change in

public opinion and consequent legislation. We had no idea of making prisons "play-houses" or "summer resorts" or "make-the-scoundrels-happy" kindergartens, any more than we deluded ourselves with the thought that life in Butchertown, or the coal fields of West Virginia, or the sweatshops of New York, was the best of which humanity was capable. We both realized that prisons, like insane asylums, poorhouses, wage slavery and the slums were only symptoms; that professional criminal offenders were comparatively few, and that with a logical prison system that particular symptom of the social ailment could be treated more successfully than it was being treated, pending the time when the cause of all these symptoms should enter into man's consciousness.

"What do you care about what people think, so long as you know you are not what they think?" asked Morrell after one of our long discussions of the subject. "Have you ever heard of any one starting out with the honest purpose of sublevating entrenched notions who wasn't ridiculed, maligned, condemned, no matter what good might be ultimately accomplished? Of course not. We'll get the posters; and I believe we will at least convince those who come to hear us that we are on the square."

I capitulated, and the posters were ordered, though the order put us in debt to the extent of more than $100. We also decided to engage an advance man to make arrangements in the different towns and cities and see to it that our "paper" was properly displayed. We agreed to pay the advance man $100 a month and his expenses, and we instructed him to get the best possible terms from the managers and owners of theatres and halls. In most instances he drew contracts on a basis of 50 per cent. of the gross receipts to each party, although in some places he got 60-40 per cent. agreements, in our favor. At other

places he hired halls for specific sums, posted the handbills himself, and left it to us to make expenses.

To the casual observer these details of a lecture tour such as we started on are unknown. The average person is liable to unthinkingly take it for granted that the receipts from such a venture are clear profit, but such is far from being the case. In addition to the expenses already outlined, there were three of us on the road, with travelling and hotel bills and other items to foot. In some places the admission charge was 10 cents, in others 15 or 25 cents, according to the prices prevailing at the theatre or hall which we used. These admission prices were established by the local managers, and in some cases, where an effort was made to have the admission charge reduced, it could not be done because the manager of the house held that if he did so the residents of the place would expect the reduction to be permanent. In several instances where our advance man hired a hall outright, we made no admission charge, but took a collection.

Our first stopping place was San José, and we had a good audience. I remember the night particularly, because the wife and son of a former San Quentin official were present. It was after I had finished my address and while Morrell was speaking that I noticed them, and my mind went back to the last Christmas I spent in San Quentin. The family had invited another prisoner and myself to their Christmas dinner. He, the husband and father, had supervision of the prison accounts, as the representative of the State Board of Prison Directors, and I was the bookkeeper. The other man was his stenographer. When the invitation came for us to go up to his residence for Christmas dinner I had at first declined, because I felt that the situation would be embarrassing. But I had been prevailed upon to accept, and we had en-

joyed a splendid home-cooked dinner, and sat at the table with the family, just like two human beings.

The aftermath came a few days later, when the families of some of the other prison officials began to "cut" the family with which we had dined. It developed that these families considered it very improper and unseemly that two convicts should have been received socially in an officer's house, even on Christmas Day. The stenographer and myself felt very keenly about the matter, because it hurt us to think that unpleasantness had come to the family which had treated us so kindly. I tried to express our regret to our overseer, but he turned on me like a flash.

"Any person who doesn't like what I do in my own home can keep away," he said. "I'm glad it happened. It's given me a line on some of these masqueraders."

He resigned his position at the prison some months later and resumed business for himself.

At the conclusion of our lecture that night in San José the lady and her son came forward and shook hands with us. They did not know Morrell; he had been pardoned before their advent at San Quentin.

"You must come out and see us," they both urged, and I promised to do so. Several months elapsed before I got the opportunity, but I kept the promise. Perhaps the most vivid impression of my visit was the reception I received from their dog. The dog had known me at the penitentiary; he used to come down to the office, especially on cold or rainy days, and lie before the grate fire. He was not a dog of any particular breed, but he possessed in full measure the canine capacity for comradeship. When I entered the yard of the residence near San José the same dog came bounding around the corner of the house, barking as if he intended to devour me alive, but

ceased as soon as he saw me, and started cutting such capers as only a pleased canine can cut. To follow each movement with the eye was almost impossible; to describe the movements is utterly so. I had not spoken a word, and yet he knew me. When I did speak I began to wonder if there was such an institution as an asylum for insane dogs. His paws were dirty, but the adhesions from Mother Earth were natural to him, and he made them natural to me. He wiped his paws all over me. Suddenly it occurred to me that this dog had never seen me save in stripes and that my changed apparel made no difference. I was still the man under the stripes, the entity within the man, to him. It was a staggering thought, so much so that I sat down on the porch steps and took the dog's head between my hands to talk to him. But before I got started the door opened and I was welcomed into the house, where I had another home-cooked dinner. I don't suppose the neighbors would have objected very much had they known.

The members of that family are still my friends and I see them occasionally. The father has secured work for a number of ex-prisoners and has helped others on the road to rehabilitation. I was going to write that they are noble people, but decided not to. To be a Christian — a real Christian, I mean — is not noble; it's to be happy, with never a thought of hurting a fellow-being for the sake of hurting. A noble person is something less than a Christian. One of the best Christians I know keeps a saloon in San Francisco, but he doesn't know he's a Christian — he just is one. He's trying to sell the saloon, but I hope he fails. So long as we have saloons, Christian saloonkeepers are invaluable.

If stripes, or rags, or broadcloth don't proclaim a man or woman to a dog why should they to a Christian?

CHAPTER XXXII

I WAS reluctant to leave San José the next morning because I had met an artist, and artists are always interesting. To most persons "an artist" means a painter or sculptor, but the artist I met was a grave-digger. I had been unable to sleep during the night and at daylight I had got up to take a long walk. I don't know how far I had gone, but was going along with my head down, and thinking, when I became aware that I was passing a cemetery. I had not been in a cemetery for years and felt impelled to explore this one. It was while I was wandering from mound to mound, reading moss-grown inscriptions, that I came upon the grave-digger. He was a little old man with small grey eyes and heavy brows. His face was deeply wrinkled and free from beard. An abbreviated clay pipe, black with age, projected snugly from the corner of his mouth, and I noted when he removed it that nature had puckered the lips on one side in deference to habitual use. His blue overalls had been recently washed, and there was a neat patch at one of the knees. It was evident that a woman was sharing his old age.

"You're up early," he greeted after we had exchanged "good mornings."

"Not any earlier than you," I laughed.

"My getting up in the morning depends on the vagaries of the Grim Reaper," he mused.

A lengthy conversation, in which he recounted a number of interesting anecdotes in his experience as a grave-digger, followed, until it was time for me to depart in order

to catch my train. He had impressed me deeply with his quaint philosophy, and I determined to see him again. Several times since, while in San José, I have looked him up. Only a few weeks ago I went out to the same cemetery and found him at work. He was nearing the completion of a grave, and was so intent on his work that he would not talk with me, but finally, when he had achieved the six geometrical feet and had clambered up, he broke silence.

"Isn't she a beauty?" he asked, nodding toward the gaping earth wound.

"She certainly is," I replied; "not a rough spot; just like the walls of a room, and the corners straight as a die. Whom is it for?"

"For you, if you're ready," he said pleasantly; "all comers look alike to me, only I'm wondering who'll dig mine."

"But I'm not ready. Stop your kidding. Tell me, who is the grave —"

"Kidding! Kidding!" he ejaculated. "I'm surprised at you. Do you think digging graves is a joke?"

"Isn't life a joke?" I asked, taking a cigar from my pocket and leisurely lighting it.

"Well — yes, I guess it is," he said, eyeing and sniffing the smoke. "I guess it is."

"And aren't you and I and all the rest mere jokes?" I persisted.

"Yes, sure we are, of course we — No, no. What am I talking about? What did I tell you about William the last time I saw you?"

I professed to have forgotten, though I knew he referred to Shakespeare.

"Didn't I tell you that William asked who builds stronger than a mason or carpenter?"

"Stronger than a mason or carpenter?" I questioned, "why no, I don't remember that."

"You don't? Well, William said the grave-digger builds stronger than the mason or carpenter because the house he builds lasts forever."

We remained silent for a few moments and I handed him a cigar, well knowing that it would make him talk.

"Will you build me an everlasting house?" I finally asked.

"I hope not," he replied quickly. "I'll be gone before you, let some other dish do it, and more power to him. But why shouldn't I do it?" he added after a moment's reflection. "Why not? Doesn't it mean peace and —"

"'Peace?'" I interrupted. "You mean laziness, indolence, inactivity, don't you?"

"Well, putting it that way," he answered, "I guess I do; but isn't that what we're all working for?"

I evaded reply by asking my original question, "Whom is the grave for?"

"It's for a girl, a girl-wife," he answered, puffing his cigar viciously. "I knew her when she was a baby, and watched her grow up. She became a buxom lass and pure and good, but like many another, she set herself for the wrong man. Bert was all right in his way, but had no business with a wife. He isn't the right kind. He married her, all right, but the baby was born too soon, and — well — here's the six feet." He pointed to the gaping hole, and I shuddered. "No, life isn't a joke," he mused, "it isn't a joke."

It was this old man that made me loath to leave San José that morning nearly two years ago.

I met Morrell on the train and he wanted to know where I had been. "Out to a cemetery," I replied, "and I met a character; I wish you had been along."

"And I wish I hadn't," he laughed; "I want to keep away from a cemetery as long as I can."

Arrived at Gilroy we found that the manager of the theatre was an old acquaintance; we had both known him behind the walls at San Quentin. He had been a legislator, but had succumbed to the lure of the moneyed interests and had accepted a bribe for his vote on a certain measure. Up to the time he entered the prison and I became acquainted with him I had imagined that to be a public official of the nature he had been necessitated a more or less finished education in letters. He disillusioned me.

After a short talk with him at the Gilroy station we went to a hotel, where I wrote until lunch time, and in the afternoon we were invited to go for a ride in the manager's automobile through the surrounding country.

There was a good-sized crowd at the theatre that night, but the place was cold, despite the fact that there was a large wood burner in the building. I noticed a mother who had brought a young child with her, and she was obliged to wrap the little one under her cloak to keep it warm. Nearly every one in the audience was noticeably uncomfortable, and many persons left before we had finished.

After it was over and the audience had departed the manager came forward to where we were standing, his fat face beaming with satisfaction.

"I made a good piece of money to-night," he announced; "you fellows are all right."

"Why didn't you have a fire in the stove," I asked, "the place was like a barn?"

"Oh, they're used to that; they don't mind it," he replied; "besides, wood costs money, you know."

I was disgusted and turned to go, but he asked us to go

over to his house and meet his wife, " and we'll have a bite to eat," he added.

I declined at first, but changed my mind when he said something about his child. I was curious to see if the pronounced facial type had been reproduced.

At the house we had a light supper, but I did not see the child. His wife proved to be a pleasant little woman, and for the time being I forgot how I had watched our audience shiver half an hour before. But the next day I wrote an article for the local paper in which I pointed out that money gained at the expense of patrons' comfort was not only poor business policy, but a menace to the health of the community. This article was published, and I received a letter from the manager a few days later in which he reminded me of the automobile ride and the supper and accused me of being basely ungrateful. I guess I was.

CHAPTER XXXIII

It is only fourteen miles from Gilroy to Hollister, our next "stand," and we made the journey in the morning. One of the passengers on the train was a crippled girl with an ethereal face, and when she passed down the aisle of the car in which we were riding and left a card in my hand we were much interested. On one side of the card was some verse; on the other side a short statement to the effect that the girl and her mother were alone in the world, that the girl had been crippled in an accident, that she had musical talent to an unusual degree and that she aspired to a course of training to develop her talent. Any assistance would be gratefully received. It is against the rules of the railroad company to solicit on trains, but she distributed the cards so deftly that she escaped detection, and when she came back for the card she had left with us we both made a donation. At Hollister we happened to go to the same hotel, and after lunch Morrell engaged her in conversation. We learned that her method of raising money was very successful; she was supporting her mother and herself and had nearly $400 in the bank as the result of seven months' travel.

"I shrink from it all," she told us, her eyes shining honestly, "but it was this or starvation. Just as soon as we save enough I shall take up music, and I know I am going to be successful. I love it. I shall never be satisfied until I learn to play a harp as I hear it played in my dreams — like the antiphon of singing souls."

Ancient Greece exposed her congenital cripples at birth. We allow ours to live, and many of them are forced to commercialize their misfortune. We shudder at the Greek method. How will 2000 years hence look upon ours?

During the afternoon I visited the offices of the local newspapers to leave "copy" concerning our work. At two of the offices I was received courteously, but in the third I was flayed by the editor — a tall, angular man with jaundiced complexion.

"Give you space!" he shouted, when he learned who I was and the object of my call. Jumping up from his chair and shaking his fist under my nose, he vociferated further: "If I had my way I'd have you and every other ex-con. burned at the stake. Don't talk reform to me. I say hang 'em, hang 'em all, but make 'em manufacture their own ropes first. Didn't I have a gun shoved in my face on my way home one night and lose my purse? D'you suppose I forget that?"

Repeatedly I tried to remonstrate, but each attempt merely added to his fury. Every one in the office was watching us, and even people passing on the street were attracted by the strident voice and stopped to look in. I wanted to withdraw, but hated to appear to be retreating.

"Come and hear us," I finally managed to interject as he stopped a moment for breath.

"'Come and hear you?'" he screamed; "'come and hear you?' I'd like to come and see you guillotined. Get out of here, you impudent scoundrel; get out before I kick you out."

I'd like to dodge the truth, but I cannot. I "got out," followed by a flow of invective that made me itch to turn back and challenge him to a physical fight. It was the most painful experience I had ever had, and it was hard

to leave the place in such a humiliating way. Out on the sidewalk I discovered that I was trembling. My only consolation was that I had shown more self-control than he. I also determined to make my talk that night as forceful as I could without being intemperate.

While Morrell and I were engaged in erecting the "derrick" on the stage of the theatre an hour or so later, the manager of the house came in and introduced himself. At first glance I did not accord him any particular attention, but after a few minutes it began to dawn on me that I had seen him before. There was something elusively familiar about him, and I spent five minutes in vainly trying to remember.

"Where have I seen you before?" I asked.

"Well, that's strange," he replied. "I was asking myself the same question about you; but I meet so many persons that I forget."

"But I know that I knew you somewhere, some time; it —" I broke off suddenly. A picture had flashed into my mind, a picture of two schoolboys surrounded by a crowd of their fellows, in a churchyard — fighting. It was winter and the sky was lowering.

"Do you remember fighting with another kid one Friday afternoon after school?" I asked. "The fight lasted until it was interrupted by one of the teachers on his way home, and the boys all ran. Later it was agreed to finish it the next Monday afternoon, but the big blizzard began that night and there was no school for two weeks. Do you remember?"

"Do I remember?" he parroted. "Well, I should say I do. It was over a girl. 'Fatty' Lowrie objected to my making faces at her in class, and — Lowrie? Lowrie? Why, you're not 'Fatty' Lowrie?"

"The same Lowrie," I laughed joyfully, "but sadly

minus the fat. I grew like a weed between sixteen and twenty, and I've stayed that way."

"Well, I'll be—! How are you, anyway?" and his hand shot out for a prolonged clasp with mine. "Strange I shouldn't have noticed the name being the same," he added, "but we all called you 'Fatty,' and you've changed."

"What became of Lucy, the girl?" I asked eagerly.

"The last I heard of her she had three children. She married Ben Wyman. Remember him?"

I remembered, because Ben had been a much larger boy than the rest of us, and I had been one of three smaller boys who had challenged him to a fight. I don't know how it is now, but during my schooldays if a small boy had a grievance against a large one he picked out one or two friends of his own age as helpers and then challenged the "big fellow" to fight. I had issued such a challenge to Ben Wyman, and he had accepted, and such a trouncing as we got I don't believe has ever been paralleled under similar circumstances. A fictitious bob-sleigh accident explained my battered condition when I got home.

Morrell was abandoned, left to erect the "derrick" alone, while the manager and I sojourned to a pile of boxes in the alley back of the theatre where the storm-clouded years since our boyhood were forgotten. Mental pictures of riotous summer days in the swimming pool, or dodging the blacksnakes in the blackberrying patches come flooding over me.

Eager questions, prefaced by "And do you remember?" neither of us could find sufficient opportunity to ask. Finally when it was nearing dark Morrell sought us out, reminding us that it was dinner time.

There was a good crowd at the theatre that night, and both Morrell and myself seemed to be at our best. The

theatre, a concrete structure, well lighted and heated and scrupulously clean, was one of the best I had ever seen in a city of Hollister's size. There was an air of comfort, of success, of good-fellowship.

After the crowd was gone and while we were engaged in taking down and packing the "derrick," the manager came up on the stage and insisted that we should go with him to supper. He took us to a café, where, despite my protestations, he opened a bottle of wine. After his second glassful he asked the musicians to play "Gee, But It's Good to Meet a Friend From Your Home Town."

Of course, I know that many persons will be horrified at this frank confession of truth. I well know that others will seize on it and proclaim me reprehensible. But, as stated at the start of this narrative, I'm merely trying to show what life "outside" has been to me. And in trying to do that I am ever bearing in mind what a very prominent man and close student of human nature said to me a few months ago. We had been discussing "Truth," and he asked:

"What would happen if EVERYBODY in the world suddenly told the truth about themselves?"

"They wouldn't; they couldn't. Could you? Could I?" I answered.

"Of course they couldn't," he agreed. "But suppose they did; what would happen?"

"Including the 'good' people, the self-righteous, the self-satisfied?" I temporized.

"Including everybody, with no exceptions," he persisted.

"I don't know, I'm sure," I mused. "What would happen?"

"We'd all laugh," he replied, succinctly.

CHAPTER XXXIV

At Santa Cruz the next day we learned that our advance man had engaged the Opera House for us, but our inspection of it revealed that it would not do. It was an old, barn-like structure on a side street, with all the earmarks of having been built when the city was in its infancy. It not only suggested, but compelled the designation "Oprey House." Santa Cruz, a cosmopolitan little city, had outgrown it.

By making inquiries we learned where the owner lived, and after repeated knockings at the door a small old lady appeared. She wore bowed spectacles with black rims, and her thin grey hair was streaked with black. She looked comfortable in a pale-blue wash wrapper and pink knit slippers. In reply to our question she admitted being the owner and manager of the "Oprey House"— as she termed it — and wanted to know if we were the "parties" who were to appear there that night.

"We're the parties," said Morrell, "but the Opera House will not do; it's too out of the way."

The old lady immediately declared that we must use it. Our "manager" had paid her $10, and she insisted that we should fill the engagement, and pay the balance. From experience I had learned to remain quiet while Morrell conducted a negotiation of this nature. We were not invited into the house, but held the consultation on the "piazza." After repeated efforts to annul the contract, Morrell finally yielded and a compromise was effected, though the old lady decried us as a "couple of schemers"

when we bade her good-bye. She had pocketed a few dollars for nothing, but we were none the less "schemers."

Aside from the fact that the Opera House was undesirably located another reason why we cancelled the engagement was because our "paper" had not been posted. Our advance man was supposed to telegraph to the lithographers in San Francisco so soon as he closed an engagement, and arrange to have the sheets and cards expressed and posted. This had not been accomplished at Santa Cruz, though we did not learn until long afterward that our agent had done his part, but the shipment had gone astray. On our way back to town I noticed a motion picture theatre in course of renovation. It was on the main street, and seemed near completion.

"Let's see if we can't make a deal," I suggested to Morrell. "Let's hire this place for to-night, if we can, and get out handbills like we did at Healdsburg."

At first he objected, holding that it would be too much of a gamble, but after we had found and interviewed the manager and learned that we could have the place for $15, Morrell agreed.

"Go and write something for the evening papers," he said, "and I'll get a sign painted and have the handbills printed."

It was 2 o'clock in the afternoon, so I lost no time in acting on the suggestion. At 3 o'clock several boys were on the streets distributing handbills and our sign was on display in front of the theatre. Also, I had the assurance of the local editor that my "write-up" would appear.

At 11 o'clock that night, after all bills had been paid, we found that we were $3 ahead.

"Enough to pay our night's lodging and for breakfast," said Morrell, jingling a handful of nickels and

dimes. "We're some schemers, we are; we're liable to bankrupt California at this rate. But I liked the questions the audience asked, so count the night as a gain."

While Morrell had been speaking that night I had been called off the stage to answer a telephone call, and had found myself talking with the manager of the theatre at Hollister.

"Can you fellows come back here?" he asked. "A lot of people missed you and want to hear you. If to-morrow night's open I'll play it up."

It happened that we were not scheduled for the next night, so I accepted the offer, and we were at the station early the next morning to catch the first train. While waiting for the train to arrive we watched some expressmen unloading a baggage car and witnessed a comedy. A crate of white chickens slipped from its place on a truck and fell to the ground. In the crash one of the slats flew loose and before the aperture could be covered a chicken had escaped. It stood bewildered for a moment, but when one of the baggagemen dived to seize it and missed the chicken began running.

"Chicken escaped!" shouted another one of the expressmen as he took in the situation. He could not have made the announcement more seriously had he been proclaiming a failure of the Bank of England. And the manner in which trainmen and passengers took up the chase of the terrified bird seemed to indicate that they feared financial calamity to the express company should the chicken get away. Twice around the station, with a dozen men in close pursuit, and then off across the railroad tracks fluttered the chicken. While crossing the tracks two of the pursuers tripped and went down in a heap together. The chicken finally took refuge under the trucks of a freight car, and after a consultation several of

the men crawled under from different sides and the end and the chicken was captured. As it was brought back across the tracks it squawked miserably. It was shoved into the crate and the slat was nailed into place. One of the expressmen created a general laugh when he remarked, "I never knew it was so hard to catch a chicken in Santa Cruz."

That night in Hollister I had a valuable experience. We had secured a subject for the jacket, but could not inveigle a victim for the "derrick." Repeatedly Morrell pleaded for a volunteer from the audience, but got no response. At last, when it looked hopeless, I got up from my seat.

"I'll go into the 'derrick,'" I said, stepping forward.

I noted that Morrell's eyes glinted. I had never experienced punishment in the "derrick," and he had. He looked at me speculatively, and then turned to the audience.

"Are you going to let Mr. Lowrie wear handcuffs again?" he asked. "He has repeatedly told me that he would never again feel the cold steel about his wrists."

There was no response.

"Go ahead," I urged; "there is no shame attached."

I felt that it was important that the demonstration should be made, especially so considering that we had been called for a second appearance.

So Morrell cuffed my hands behind my back and the next instant I was jerked up so that my toes barely touched the floor. The cuffs were cutting into my wrists and I swayed from side to side in the effort to stand on my toes. I found that by making a supreme effort I could stand on my toes for a few seconds at a time, thus relieving the strain on my wrists and shoulders.

Five minutes passed and I was trembling. Morrell

was making his usual appeal to the audience, telling them of men whom he had seen crippled for life in the jacket or "derrick," and he was so intent on his subject that he seemed to have forgotten me. I was suffering intensely and each moment the agony became worse. Twice I determined to call for relief, but did not do so because I imagined some of the audience might think it a stage cry, made for effect. At last, when I seemed to be losing consciousness, Morrell turned and saw me. He was in the middle of an anecdote, but stopped short to come over and let me down. As my heels touched the floor I staggered against the upright of the "derrick."

"I forgot you," said Morrell in an undertone. "Why didn't you call?"

He looked at his watch. "You were up nine minutes," he said, and then repeated the announcement to the audience.

After the handcuffs had been removed I put on my coat and stepped off the stage to examine my wrists. There were blue marks showing where the steel had bitten and my hands were numb.

It was not until that "tricing up" in the "derrick" that I fully appreciated what terrible torture it was. The experience served to make me more determined than ever to plead and fight for the abolition of the atrocity. There was nothing sentimental about my attitude, certain newspapers to the contrary notwithstanding.

CHAPTER XXXV

MONTEREY, which was our next stopping place, is one of the oldest settlements in California, and was once the capital of the State. About its cracked and crumbling adobe structures, which sag at the end of the main street, there still lingers the indolent atmosphere of bygone manana days.

An old man whose oily garb proclaimed him a toiler of the sea noted our interest in the buildings and told us many absorbing facts. I wish I could recall all that he said, but I cannot — it is only of recent date that the idea of keeping a diary occurred to me. All I have written, and nearly all I shall write in this narrative is or will be the fruit of memory — a treacherous quality in the best of us. Nevertheless, some events stand out clear in the recollection of each human being, though the passage of time ruthlessly obliterates the most important element — detail. It is only by recording what one sees each day that this chief factor in writing can be preserved. But I remember some of the things the old fisherman said. I had noticed a sign, "Salvation Army," on one of the aged buildings, and had asked why the "Army" didn't have a hall nearer the centre of town. "Because they get that place cheap," was his answer, "and God knows they have to hustle to make both ends meet. I often wonder how they live at all. Yet sometimes it amuses me to think back. S'pose the old padres who lived here a hundred 'r so years ago could come back an' see th' saloons over there on the corners and the Presidio up there on th' hill, with

its soldiers and guns, an' th' Salvation Army stuck in between. I tell y' Christianity is losing ground all th' time. I've seen it lose in my 70 years. I don't mean Christ's sermon on the mount, but th' way people ignore it. What He said can never die, but lots of folks act as though it had. We puff up an' think we're improved, but we're only fertilizer, decayin' so's comin' generations will grow an' get a fresh hold, an' press on to th' great light.

"I'm an old man, but I see — I see. Who are you boys, anyway? It's so seldom any one takes an int'rest in these ol' buildings, or cares to listen to my palaver."

"We're ex-convicts," blurted Morrell, extending his hand, "and glad to meet you."

A spasmodic revulsion of feeling dimmed the old man's eyes, but he recovered quickly, and chuckled.

"That's purty good," he cackled, "but it ain't true. Why do y' try to hurt me by sayin' that?"

"Hurt you?" flashed Morrell. "Hurt you? Haven't you just been prattling Christianity? Haven't you been talking about the 'great light'? I tell you we're ex-convicts.

"Look," he exclaimed, seizing the old man's arm. "There's one of our posters staring you in the face, plastered on the wall of a 'sacred' building: 'Lowrie and Morrell. Tortures of Prison Life Fearlessly and Truthfully Exposed!' Look for yourself."

The old man blinked his small grey eyes rapidly and passed his gnarled hand over his white beard.

"Are you really Lowrie an' Morrell?" he asked.

"Have you got a card?" asked Morrell, addressing me, while producing his own.

I handed him one of my cards and he proffered it, along with his, to the patriarch.

"No, no. Never mind. I b'lieve yo'," protested the old man. "I — I thought you were a couple of tourists. I read your story in *The Bulletin*," he added, turning to me, "and it was interestin'. I never thought about the way prisoners was treated before, an' it was a good thing to write; but listen to me, both of you — I've worked like a dog all my life. I started in when I was a small boy, goin' out to fish when it was all I could do to hang on to the boat when the combers washed over us. When I was a young man I risked my life time and ag'in t' save fellow fishers when Davy Jones was callin' hard. As a middle-aged man I worked like a slave to send my little 'uns to school, but had t' take the boys out an' send 'em onto the deep. As an ol' man I am mendin' nets — just managin' to die instead of live toward m' grave. An' yet, many's th' time durin' the long struggle I had chances to make money dishonest. One time I could ha' picked up a thousand dollars — just think o' that, a thousand dollars! — by meetin' a smuggler far out at sea and bringin' in five Chinamen in my smack. Another time I could ha' had five hundred if I'd ha' give the gove'nment off'cers a false scent an' attract them to a certain point while smugglers landed at another place. The smugglers knew I had an iron-clad reputation with the off'cers an' that a word from me was gospel. But did I fall? No. I c'n look back over my life, and except stealin' half a boatload of fish when I was a lad an' didn't know any better, I c'n say I've been honest, while both of you have been in the penitenshry — and without half 's hard a life as I've had."

"How do you know?" asked Morrell. "How old were you when you went to sea?"

"Oh, 'bout 14 or 15," was the response.

"And how old were your boys when they went to sea?"

"'Bout the same age, I should say."

"Well, I was working in a coal mine, spragging cars, when I was eight years old, and never saw sunlight except on Sundays and holidays for eight years," said Morrell. "I was known as 'Eddie' then, but I've since been known as 'the bandit' and 'the incorrigible,' and to-day I'm known as an ex-convict. I couldn't stand the early pressure, with no marbles or baseball, and you could, that's all; but I'm just as honest now as you are, though I can't help but think that your type of honesty has helped to keep back the dawn of the 'great light' more than my dishonesty has done."

The old man did not reply. He seemed to be thinking, and I took advantage of the silence to ask a question.

"How old were you when you stole the half boatload of fish?" I inquired.

"'Bout 19, I should say," he replied. "But you see it was like this. There was a war on and we was gettin' the worst of it. There wasn't any bread in the house an' I—"

"About 19?" I repeated, interrupting the extenuation. "About 19? Why, I know a boy now serving twenty years at San Quentin who was sent there when he was 16 for stealing a few cents from the pocket of a drunken man. The boy was starving and desperate, thousands of miles from home and friends, alone in a strange city. You were not caught, that's all. Like thousands of others, you were lucky enough to escape detection—you didn't pay a penalty. Oh, I know that hurts," I added quickly, as he tried to interrupt me, "and don't think we want to hurt you, we've been hurt ourselves, but it's true, and I challenge any man to examine his life closely between the years of 16 and 30 and proclaim that he has never done anything which called for a jail or

prison sentence if discovered. The ones who are caught become 'criminals and ex-convicts'; the ones uncaught sit on juries and are called good citizens, and far be it from me to say that they are not good citizens," I added, "for how is it possible to be good, save by being bad?"

The old man said something about degrees of good and bad.

"Of course there are degrees," I admitted, "but some of the worst 'bad' persons I have ever known have been the best 'good' persons; and some of the worst 'good' persons have been the best 'bad'—"

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," he interrupted. "You fellers are too swift; you jump to conclusions; you didn't let me finish. I was boastin' of my honesty, o' sacrificin' my boys to the sea, of workin' like a dog all my life, of servin' the government, but I was only fillin' in th' background. I told you I see clear — that I see the great light — an' I do.

"One of the Gov'ment officers — one of the very men that I gave up the $1000 for — took my daughter from us. P'rhaps it was because he was payin' attention to her that I didn't listen t' th' smugglers; I don't know. He got an increase in sal'ry an' was promoted for discoverin' the plot, an' then he ruined Jennie. She went away an' we didn't hear from her for a long time. Then she started sendin' me money. She said she was married an' happy, but I knew — I knew — I knew. Out on the sea at night I saw her, an' I threw th' money into the black waves. But lately — lately —"

The old man's voice broke, and he turned away.

"Lately?" I urged, all sense of sympathy and consideration smothered by my desire to establish life. "But lately —?"

He turned back, his face a picture of mingled shame and

defiance. "Well, lately we've been usin' th' money," he admitted. "What y' got to say about it?"

Morrell extended his hand impulsively, glaring at me. "Say about it?" he asked. "Why, she's a good daughter; and when I say good I mean good. She was human, and she is still human, just like we are, just like all the rest. Your life has been little different from the lives of millions of others. It might have been better if you had taken the $1000. You say it would have been dishonest, but that's because you were only a small cog in the ponderous machine we call civilization. You did the best you could, just as we have done, and are doing. Some will condemn you for what you did do, but Jennie was more to you than the praise of the majority, could you only have known. In your old age you are beginning to see things as they really are — the vast army of slaves and the few impaternal masters. You and Jennie have served to hasten the growth of slave sight. You have been good fertilizer; your existence was necessary."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE forlorn figure of the old fisherman and the story of his life haunted me all that day. Repeatedly I thought of him as he had turned away from us in response to a hail from the wharf. That night when I stepped out from the wings to speak I was not myself; I was still thinking of the old man.

The hall in which we spoke was upstairs, with only one entrance, and the building was old. It was after we had "cinched" the evening's victim in the jacket, and while Morrell was descanting on the horror of the torture that an alarm of "Fire!" sounded. Men leaped to their feet in all parts of the hall and rushed pell-mell for the egress. In the excitement a woman screamed, and for a moment it looked as if there might be a stampede.

"The fire isn't here," shouted Morrell. "They're only responding to the bell. Don't get excited."

I was seated to the right of the stage, near the wings, and close to the man in the jacket. When he spoke it startled me.

"If anything's wrong, don't overlook me," he said.

The calm manner in which he made the request, as well as his helplessness, impressed me. Had there been a fire in the building it would have been necessary to carry him out; there would not have been time to unlace the jacket, though a sharp knife might have been used to sever the ropes. I had never before so keenly realized how helpless the jacket rendered its victim. The next day I bought a strong pocket knife.

At Salinas the following night we spoke in one of the fraternity halls before an appreciative audience. The next morning we went on to Paso Robles, where we indulged in a sulphur-water swim in the big tank at the hotel. That night two small boys who had helped us to erect the "derrick" and make other preparations begged that they might be the victims for the demonstrations. To accede to their importunities was out of the question. They were too young; but, finally, to appease them, they were given turns in the "derrick," behind the scenes. The experience seemed to awe them, and I noted that they were not nearly so talkative as they had been, but stood around as if half dazed.

"Gee, but I never want to go to prison," one of them finally remarked. He was a black-haired, black-eyed boy, with a splendid face and head, and much brighter than his companion.

"You bet you don't," said Morrell, "and you tell all the other boys in Paso Robles that they don't want to go either. Some boys think it makes them heroes to go wrong, to take chances, to do things that other boys think means they're brave. And that reminds me; do either of you know a boy about 18 or so who thinks he's tough? You know what I mean — some fellow who always has a chip on his shoulder and bullies smaller boys. I'll tell you what to do. Go out and look over the audience, and if you see any one like that, dare him to volunteer for the 'derrick.' Tell him both of you were in it."

"Oh, you're going to hurt some one," said the smaller boy. "I ain't going to help do nothin' like that."

"Good," replied Morrell. "Never be a party to anything underhanded, and always stick to your chums when a stranger is around. But I'm not going to hurt him any more than I hurt you. If there is some tough fellow in

town it might do him good to get a taste of what to expect if he keeps on being tough, don't you see?"

The two boys, convinced that we had no cruel designs, went out into the hall to carry the plan into execution.

"You made a serious mistake, Ed," I said so soon as they were gone. "Don't you see that by giving them the impression that the 'derrick' will scare the 'tough' whom they are going to snare, you justify the use of torture? It shouldn't be the fear of consequences that keeps boys from going wrong. They should want to do right because it is right, not in the hope of reward nor in the fear of punishment if they do otherwise."

"I agree with you," he said; "but how many people are there in the world who take that view? Don't they maintain prisons, and torture in the prisons, with the idea that the menace of punishment will keep men and women straight?"

"Surely," I replied, "but they're none the less wrong. So long as prisons are maintained as places of punishment, and judges dole out terms of years, prisons are not going to accomplish much in the way of character building. The lawbreaker should be restrained, of course, but the restraint should be constructive rather than demoralizing, and he should not be permitted to come back to society until the course of construction is complete. If he is so constituted that he will not or cannot respond to the training he should be kept under restraint indefinitely — but with the element of savagery, of punishment, eliminated. Our sole purpose in exhibiting the jacket and 'derrick' should be to show that no man or woman has ever yet been made better by torture, nor by being caged like an animal."

"Still, you heard what that boy said after he'd been in the 'derrick.' He said he didn't want to go to prison."

"But that's just what I'm arguing is bad," I resumed. "We paint a picture of hell and say to people, 'Be good, or you'll be tortured.' That is what has kept back instead of accelerated good, in my opinion, and the time will come when punishment and reward will not be factors in our relations with one another."

"Well, it's time for the curtain," said Morrell; "we'll continue the discussion afterward."

While speaking a few minutes later I noted two persons in the audience whom I knew. They were man and wife, and had visited me at *The Bulletin* office in San Francisco some weeks before, seeking a paroled man to work on their ranch. A man had been secured and sent to them, but failed to make good, and I wondered how the experience had affected them. At the close of our lecture they came forward and shook hands. I said something about being sorry that the paroled man had failed, and was relieved when they both exclaimed: "Oh, of course some men will fail. You must expect that."

At the station, while waiting for our train, due at 2 A. M., we were approached by two wanderers and asked for the "price of something to eat."

"How do you happen to be here at this time of the night?" I asked.

"Oh, we got ditched off that freight that just went through," one of them informed me. "But don't think we're regular bums, because we're not. We'd go to work to-morrow if we could get it. I'm a sign painter and my partner's a machinist. We met at Kansas City and we've come all the way together. We're headed for Frisco to get jobs at the fair. Do you think Frisco'll get the fair?"

"I surely do," I replied, "and here's my card. We'll

be back there in a month or so, and if you don't connect with work look me up."

Nearly a year later a well-dressed man walked into *The Bulletin* office and asked to see me.

"You don't remember me," he said, extending his hand.

"No, I don't," I replied, trying to think if he were from San Quentin.

"Well, do you remember two bums that you and another fellow helped at a railroad station about 2 o'clock in the morning a year or so ago?"

At first I did not recall the circumstance, but when he added details I remembered.

"We struck it lucky," he smiled; "we both got work the day after we saw you, but we were mighty hungry that night. Here's the dollar you gave us."

I took the coin and thanked him, and after he was gone I did some thinking.

CHAPTER XXXVII

One morning recently, while writing in my room, I snagged on language; I was unable to think of words that would express the thought I had in mind. While trying to evolve an expression to fit my idea I looked out of the window and was attracted by two children, a boy and a girl, who were playing on the opposite sidewalk. The house in which I live is on a hill, and from where I sat it appeared that the children were about to hold a race between what looked like paper cylinders. The boy, who was about 7, had made a much larger cylinder than his sister, who appeared to be about 5. They were squatted in front of a doorway, holding the two cylinders on a crack in the sidewalk. Beneath the golden accolade of sunbeams which had just vanquished the rain clouds the girl's hair flashed like the splendor of an aureole.

At a signal from the boy they both gave their respective cylinders an impetus, and the playthings went rolling down the pavement. Although smaller, the girl's cylinder outstripped the boy's, notwithstanding his frantic efforts with hands and feet to make his "starter" keep going. As the gutter was reached by the smaller cylinder the girl clapped her hands and danced in glee. The boy sulked for a moment and then threw his cylinder up against the side of the building. I opened my window and listened.

"You're only a girl," he taunted; "you can't throw as high as I can."

She accepted the challenge, and endeavored to throw her winner as he had thrown his loser, but failed.

"Aw, what did I tell you?" he exclaimed, "you're only a girl."

A slender young woman dressed in a slit purple suit and with a white plume in her hat had stopped to watch and listen.

"You thought you'd win the race because you had the biggest cylinder," she said, addressing the boy, "but your sister beat you fairly. Boys can't do some things as well as girls, always remember that."

"Aw, you're only a girl, grown up," retorted the youngster; "I'll bet I can throw higher than you."

"And I'll bet you can't," responded the young woman. "Go on, throw."

"Naw, you gotter throw first," said the boy.

"Not at all," she replied, "you challenged me, and you've got to set the mark. That's according to the law of games, isn't it?"

"Aw, all right," said the boy contemptuously, "it don't make any difference."

By this time I was leaning out of my window, intensely interested — in the slender young woman. She was smiling and seemed to have forgotten that she was on the street.

The boy, after winding his arm furiously, threw the cylinder and it struck above the second story window. When it descended the young woman started to pick it up, but the boy got ahead of her and lifted his cap as he gave it into her hands.

Still smiling, she tossed it upward, without apparent effort, and it struck the face of the building above the third floor.

The little girl danced again and clapped her hands.

Repeatedly the boy tried to equal the mark which had been set for him, but failed. At last he desisted, and

started to run down the street in pretended pursuit of a passing dog.

"Wait a minute," said the young woman, running after him and taking his arm. "You're a boy now, but some day you'll be a man and your sister will be a woman. Always try to remember that a girl is just as good, just as big as a boy. Of course if a grown-up boy had been throwing against me, I might have been beaten, but there are lots of things at which I can beat a grown-up boy, just the same."

This little incident, which may seem trifling and inconsequential to many persons, made me forget my writing. I watched the young woman — hoping that she would turn into a near-by doorway — until she disappeared around the second corner, and then I fell to thinking. What I had witnessed exemplified that even a boy 7 years of age was dominated by the fallacy of sex supremacy. He had been unable to tolerate being beaten by a girl, whether 5 years old or 20.

And yet, in discussing the growing problem of unemployed men with a friend the day before he had said: "I think it's the invasion of the industrial field by women that is largely responsible. A hundred years ago men were filling the positions that are now filled by women, and remuneration is less as a consequence. Also, many men who might be employed are out of work. I don't believe women should work, except in taking care of households."

"In other words, you believe that women should be held inferior to men; you don't believe in economic independence; in equal sex manifestation?" I asked.

"No, I wouldn't say that," he replied, "because I believe women are better than men. I believe we'd be better men if women had a say, but —"

"But what?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"Well, they need to be cared for, don't they? Don't they suffer more than men? Don't they give us birth, and don't they love us?"

"Surely they do," I replied, "but in saying that they need to be cared for you mean that we need their care. You mean that in caring for them we are merely caring for ourselves, don't you?"

He did not reply immediately. Then he said, "You don't seem to get me. I mean that by caring for women, by letting them confine their efforts to the household, to the rearing of children, a better race of men will be produced, and womanhood accordingly advanced. Can't you see that?"

"I guess I'm no blinder than men have been for several thousand or more years," I answered. "So long as women rear boys and girls to adolescence and men have the exclusive right of making laws — licensing the sale of liquor and the sacrifice of girls' souls — to govern young manhood and womanhood, are mothers getting a square deal? Why, only a few months ago a State official in addressing the students at a local university advised them not to be 'reformers,' but 'performers,' meaning that they should fall in line with the established order of things, by which a few are growing richer and the masses poorer. I maintain, I tell you, that the betterment of the race depends on the moral and economic independence of women — of mothers, just as much as it depends on a like condition for fathers. Women have as much right to be free as men have; without them you and I wouldn't be holding this discussion."

The probability is that I was too positive, too cocksure, in my assertions, for I failed to convince him. He merely laughed and said: "You're young yet; you'll see more clearly when you've lived more."

And all this has come back to my mind because of a woman I met at San Luis Obispo, where Morrell and myself appeared the next night.

She had written me several letters, to which I had replied, and I was naturally curious to meet her. I had pictured a middle-aged woman, tall and angular, with spectacles and hatchet features, but my mental picture was erased by her youth, blue eyes and vivacity, and by a most alluring lack of self-assertiveness — whether assumed or real it was beyond my experience to determine.

"Why don't you write more about women?" was one of the first questions she asked me after we had seated ourselves in the parlor of the hotel, following a telephonic appointment. "You have not had half a dozen women in your work, so far, and yet we count. Don't you think so?"

"I certainly do," I replied, "but my experience and acquaintance with women have been limited. In fact, I'm afraid of them. They make me self-conscious to an uncomfortable degree."

I can still hear the soft laugh which answered this confession, and I can still remember the conversation which ensued. Suffice it to say that before I spoke that night in the barn-like structure, to which we had been pledged by our advance man, I gained a new impression of women, and of women's rights. She succeeded, beyond cavil, in convincing me that "the woman with the masculine mind" is a libel.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

LEAVING San Luis Obispo we had a three days' interval before our next engagement. Our agent had written that Santa Barbara and Ventura had proved to be "hard places for an in," but that he had nevertheless succeeded in getting us booked. On arriving at Santa Barbara, however, we were informed that the engagement had been cancelled — a burlesque show in our stead had proved too great a lure for the manager of the theatre; also, that a similar cancellation had been made at Ventura. This meant nearly a week of idleness, and we decided to remain in Santa Barbara for at least part of that time.

My chief recollection of the place is the band concerts. It was the first city I had ever visited where a band concert is given every day, and the music was excellent, ragtime being patently absent. We learned that the band was supported by the city. It was splendid that two or three hours each day should be devoted to music — the highest achievement of the human mind — but what jarred on me was the fact that it couldn't be eaten, for I had seen many half-fed cholo children in the poorer sections of town. It seemed a mockery that æstheticism and squalor should comprise the woof and warp of that fabric, "civilization." The untutored savage is potentially æsthetic, but knows no penury. Why couldn't the community have its music each day without the spectre of hunger stalking amid the harmony? To me it wasn't harmony, but discord, though I am deeply stirred by music. During the concert at the beach the second day (the band

alternates daily between the park and the beach) I observed the persons present. Most of them were well dressed and looked well fed, but here and there I saw gaunt or dejected figures, some men, some women. Suddenly it occurred to me that there were no working people present, unless the musicians could be so considered, and I asked myself the question: Why shouldn't the toilers be here? But no, that was wrong; I had been thinking in the terms of tyranny. I rebelled at the segregation spelled by the term "toilers." Every working unit should be present to share in the soul-soothing music as a human being. If only the men and women who worked with brawn were considered equally important with those who worked with brain; if only the labor workers would think of themselves that way; if there were no such thing as exploitation of sweat wouldn't life be sweeter and richer for all? Could not the laborer listen to music in the afternoon if it appealed to him, and, if it did not, could he not be at home, working in his garden?

Morrell nudged me in the ribs.

"I thought you liked music," he said. "Yet you look as solemn as a piledriver. Look at that crazy leader with his flopping hair."

"Music always makes me think; that's why I like it," I replied; "and to think is enough to make any one solemn, isn't it?"

"Oh, say, you're going too far with that eternal moralizing of yours. You're getting to be a regular gloom. Come out of it. Start living below your neck a little bit," he retorted. "Let's go and bowl a game or two."

He knew I liked to bowl, also that I invariably beat him, and I readily accepted the challenge.

At the near-by bowling alleys we met two girls whom Morrell seemed to know, though I didn't learn until long

afterward that our advance man was responsible for the meeting.

Being given first choice, I chose the taller girl as a partner, and even though what I conceived as "æstheticism" had compelled my choice, our overwhelming victory proved more mundane.

I made several "strikes" in succession during the first game — more or less accidental, because I was unfamiliar with the alley — and patronizingly kept Morrell supplied with fresh cigarettes.

No game, to my mind, with the possible exception of tennis, emphasizes feminine grace and strength more than does bowling. It was like music to watch the girls in action.

After the second beating, Morrell's petite partner suggested "small pins," but we selfishly objected. The flush of victory was too intense for sentiment, and the suggestion was not permitted to root. Several games followed, with Morrell and his partner gradually improving, and it was after dark when we went up town for dinner.

At Los Angeles that night we captured our advance man, and prevented being booked into Mexico. For several days we had been striving to get in touch with him, fearful that he would lead us to Patagonia, but he had proved elusive as a dog's tail.

After admonishing him to use "better judgment," and to "go slow," we spent several days awaiting results, meanwhile playing tourists and seeing California's garden.

One day I spent alone. I took an early morning train from Los Angeles and got off at Alhambra, whence I walked the railroad track to Bassett. Each step of the way brought back vivid recollections. It was there, on that eight-mile stretch of ties and shining rails that I

had first worked in California, as a "jerry." I had arrived in California Christmas Day, 1900, in company with a young newspaper man from Tennessee, and we had essayed the task of being section hands. After three weeks' work with pick, shovel and tamping bar, I had acceded to his plea that we "try for something better," and had "resigned." After paying our board, we had a few dollars left as compensation for our labor, and went back to Los Angeles, where he succeeded in getting a position with an evening paper, and I, unable to get employment, "fell."

At Savannah, where the section house is located, I hoped to find the blonde Irishman who had been my "boss" a decade before, but was disappointed. I found the gang working south of El Monte, but the faces were all strange, and I passed them without speaking. Walking the trestle close to the Bassett station, I thought of the night we had been routed out to check a flow of water that threatened to undermine the track, and how we had worked waist-deep in the flood, piling brush and stones in a futile effort to turn the torrent.

We went to work the next morning with our legs and feet encased in sloppy and soggy shoes and trousers. They were all we had. Was Fate kind or unkind not to have left me a "jerry"? Is what we call "Fate" superior to what we term "Destiny."

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE railroad station at Bassett is isolated, and while waiting for the Los Angeles train I sat on a pile of ties and thought back over the time when I had worked on the section. For three weeks' hard physical labor, even counting the extra time allowed for night work due to washouts, I had received only a few dollars; and yet, eight years afterward, I was paid $40 by a magazine for a short story dealing with life on a section, and which required only a few hours' typewriting to get it into shape. Had I written that story immediately after leaving the section, the probability is that I would not have gone to San Quentin. Not only that, but I had received almost three times as much for the story as I had received for the labor involved in the physical experience which had enabled me to write it. Clearly, experience was valuable, not only in the lessons it taught, but because it could be converted into money. I determined there and then to get all the experience in life that I could.

The next day we received word from our advance man that he had "booked" us at Bakersfield and was proceeding up the valley.

We had both heard so much about the wonderful engineering feat in the Tehachapi, that we decided to make the trip by daylight, and we left Los Angeles early the next morning. The trip surprised our anticipations. The famous "loop" lay ghostly in the swirl of a snowstorm as we approached it from above.

By asking questions of the "rear brakeman" we gained

a faint insight into the intricacies of train manipulation.

He was a pleasant man of middle age, and had been railroading thirty years, during which time he had passed through a number of "tight places."

"My policy," he said, "has always been never to take a chance. If all railroad men followed that, there'd be fewer accidents. I remember one time when I was working for another road back East. I was rear man on a fast train that ran in sections. The road was equipped with block signals, all right, but I noticed time and time again that the engineer of the second section crept up on us when we stopped. The two sections were supposed to run five minutes apart, meaning six or seven miles, but many a time when we got stalled and I went back with my flag or lantern I'd meet section two just in the nick of time. This meant that Pete was running past semaphores — taking chances.

"After it happened several times I made it my business to have a confab with him, and told him he'd have to cut it out; that if anything happened we'd all lose our jobs. Pete had little black eyes, and they grew into beads when he got wise to my drift. He told me to mind my own business.

"'All right,' I said. 'Fair play is fair play. The next time you sneak up on me when I'm out with a flag, look out!'

"He made a slurring answer and it made me hot. I was not thinking of my job, I was thinking of diggin' for mangled pieces of women and babies in a tangle of iron an' plush an' wood, as I'd done twice before.

"A few nights later we got the block at a small station, a freight ahead of us, or somethin'— an' soon as we stopped an' I looked ahead an' saw the red light, I started back with my lantern. It was rainin', with a big wind,

an' somethin' made me run. If it 'a' been a quiet night I could 'a' listened and told if a train was behind us.

"I remember one time I was brakin' freight and we was all sittin' in the caboose waitin' for clearance. I was young then, an' takin' a chance. We had a string o' coal cars, comin' out of the Pennsylvania minin' region on a branch line, an' we knew there wasn't nothin' behind us. At least we thought so. It was a still afternoon in winter.

"Suddenly one of th' boys made a leap for the door.

"'Get out,' he yelled, 'there's somethin' comin'!'

"We didn't let any mushrooms grow 'round our feet, believe me. The way we vamoosed was a caution.

"I saw the fellow that gave the alarm tearin' up the track with a flag, and then an engine comin' 'round the curve.

"By luck she was runnin' slow, an' stopped with her pilot jammed under our platform.

"After the excitement passed everybody laughed, all except me. I was supposed to 'a' gone back with a flag, and hadn't done it. The con' knew I hadn't, and hadn't made me, but that didn't make any difference; I was supposed to 'a' done it. When that engine went into th' roundhouse at th' end of th' division an explanation would have t' be made.

"'Well, I guess it's th' can for me, boys,' I said.

"'Oh, maybe not,' said the engineer, 'though it ought to be. Wait till I back her and see what the bump amounts to.'

"As he got into th' cab I thought it was all off — I saw my finish. An' I was engaged to marry Kate the next week.

"Kate's my wife," he explained, "an' we've got two boys, both railroadin' to-day an' doin' fine.

"To me the damage looked bad, but after he backed her an' got out to make an examination, he smiled.

"'It could 'a' been done by bumpin' a tie on the track,' he said. Then he turned to me.

"'Your job's all right this time,' he said, 'but never take another chance 's long 's you're in this business. Promise me that.'

"I promised, an' meant it, an' I haven't taken a chance since.

"Well, this night I was tellin' you about I ran with th' lantern, an' sure enough, there was section two just round the curve, comin' like thunder. The whistle shrieked when they saw my red light, but as she went poundin' past, with sparks flyin' from ev'ry wheel I never dreamed she'd stop in time. But she did, an' the black-eyed engineer stuck out his sweatin' hand when I came stumblin' back — after I'd made sure that the other rear brakie had gone back of his train.

"Instead o' takin' his hand I raised my lantern and looked into his face. His beady eyes were snappin' fire.

"'That was some quick stop,' he said proudly, 'shake.'

"'No, no, there's blood on your hand, Pete,' I told him, shakin' my head to get the rain out of m' eyes, for I'd lost my cap.

"'An' remember what I tol' you in the roun' house; this'll never happen again!'

"His han' dropped to his side an' he snarled.

"'Aw, you make me tired.' Haven't I got to run on time the same's you?"

"When I got back from my run I reported him, an' th' company sent out 'spotters' to watch. They kept men watching semaphores, and had 'em ride our train 'til they had a dead case, an' then black eyes was fired.

Of course if lots of railroad men knew I did that they'd give me the go-by, but I did it just the same, and I've never felt sorry."

The brakeman told us several stories, all interesting, but this is not the story of a railroad man's life, which I wish some experienced railroad man would write.

After passing the "loop" we went into a siding to let a freight train through. It was going up grade from Caliente with three monster locomotives doing the work; one in front, one in the middle, and one near the end. The smoke from the stacks made a wonderful picture, and I regretted not having a camera.

"Why is it that there are more trains here in the mountains than elsewhere?" I asked the brakeman.

"Because this is the Tehachapi," he answered, "with two big transcontinental roads running all their trains over a single track. Surveyors have never been able to find a second pass, and the traffic is heavy. Every man and woman on this section deserves a medal; there has never been a serious accident."

The word woman recalled a girl, in cow-boy dress, whom we had seen gathering up the mail bags thrown from our train at one of the smaller stations, and that he had told us she was the "operator" there. We had been standing on the rear platform, and she had waved us a smile.

As we sat down to lunch in the combination parlor car I said to Morrell, "It's simple to ride on a train, isn't it?"

"Sure," he replied, catching the drift of my thought, "but it isn't simple to run one; I take off my hat to railroad men — and women."

"Seconded and carried," I answered. "It may be all right to tip the porter, but the crew appeals to me."

CHAPTER XL

At Bakersfield we got a letter, left there for us by our advance man, in which he advised: "Be careful of yourselves. On the train coming here I fell asleep and some one cut my shirt cuffs with a pair of scissors and got my gold links. But that wasn't all. It was late at night when I arrived, and while I was walking up town a man tried to hold me up. I had picked up a rock, and was carrying it in my hand for just such a situation. I don't know where it hit him, but when I ran he didn't follow."

Combining this letter with the fact that the railroad station was remote from the city, and that the district which had to be traversed is sparsely settled, together with the fact that most trains arrived and departed at night, and that the average passenger being too poor to hire a cab, must walk, caused us to make inquiries. We learned that the city had importuned the line to survey its right-of-way nearer to town, and that the company had declined, assuming that the station would draw the growing city its way. This had not been the case, though many years had since elapsed. We got this information from an old resident, and took it as correct.

"Railroads should be owned by the people," stormed Morrell, "as should telephones, telegraphs, express service and street cars."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because it would mean better service; more consideration for the public," he replied. "Don't you think so?"

"I think even stronger," I returned. "I believe that

government ownership and control of public utilities is the first step necessary to human emancipation, the crucial move toward doing away with unjust profits and the slavery of souls."

"And how do you make that out?" he asked.

"What develops a virgin country?" I inquired in return. "Isn't it railroads?"

"Yes, of course."

"And who builds the railroads? Is it the pioneers, the hardy men and women who venture first into the unknown and endure frontier hardships?"

"Why no, of course not," he said; "they're too busy making clearings, earning a livelihood; and besides, they haven't the money to build railroads, even if they wanted to."

"Exactly," I continued, "and some one who hasn't the money either, but who possesses what we call brains, makes moneyed people see that the pioneers engaged in living on nature have opened up avenues of wealth; that if railroads are built the pioneers will work harder, and others will be drawn to the new fields to work also..

"Before the railroad comes — even while longing for it — the pioneers make a comparatively comfortable living, especially after the first year or two, and with a minimum expenditure of labor, but with the advent of the steel rails they become avaricious. Immediately they imagine that maximum labor will bring riches. Obsessed with this idea they return to the slavery from which they have escaped, and feverishly load the result of their labor into box-cars, deluded with the idea that they will get the major portion of the returns. They also imagine that more or less frequent trips to the nearest city are necessary in the conduct of 'business.' A struggle ensues, and after 10 or 20 years the farm or ranch is

mortgaged — lost, and the pioneers go to premature graves.

"I've painted it roughly, but truthfully. I've merely pictured history — the enrichment of non-workers at the expense of life and labor, and our consequent race for wealth. If an honest government, conducted by the workers, built and controlled railroads, not to mention other so-called utilities, the problem of riches would soon be solved, for it isn't the problem of poverty that must be dealt with — it's the problem of wealth; how to do away with fortunes and make people stop wanting them. That's the way I see it."

Morrell glanced at his watch.

"We haven't eaten," he said, "and we're due at the opera house in half an hour. You're always harping on these things. Once in awhile would be plenty. Come on in and eat."

"Surely, I'm hungry," I responded, "but if it were not for the conditions I've just sketched, we wouldn't be lecturing on prisons; the chances are we would never have been prisoners, and instead of going into a hotel dining-room to eat a lot of unnecessary salad and side dishes, we would at this moment be sitting down to a substantial and sensible supper, peacefully firesided; secure in the knowledge that a few hours of physical labor had insured a warm bed and our next three meals."

"You're right, I believe," he said, half impatiently, "but we're alive to-day, not two or three hundred years from now."

Notwithstanding that he had declined to follow up the discussion, Morrell introduced another angle of the subject during dinner. In the conversation I mentioned Wilde's "De Profundis," and was swept under the table for doing so.

"De Profundis! Bah! It's a whine — a self-pitying dirge — an egotistical bid for sympathy," he asserted. "The law-breaker doesn't want sympathy and deserves none. Why should he? The trouble is we're not putting that over strong enough."

"Quite right," I hastily agreed, seeing a chance to cinch what I had said a few minutes before, "we're interesting people in results rather than causes; we might as well be telling them to keep on floundering in mud, but to stop scratching each other."

That night at the opera house Morrell told two prison stories that I had never heard him tell before. They were stories replete with psychology, and in telling them he seemed inspired; he seemed to have forgotten that he was alive. Many times afterward, at Porterville, Visalia, Hanford, Coalinga and other places I tried to get him to tell the same stories, but he wouldn't.

To recount all experiences on the lecture trip would require too much of your time to read, though each incident had its own importance in shaping our thoughts and enlarging our outlook. At one small town the city marshal refused to lend us his handcuffs for the "derrick" demonstration, saying that we were a "couple of crooks," and that we "ought to be back in jail." We did not own a pair of handcuffs, and had succeeded in borrowing a pair from the police in each place we visited, and with this one exception the police had met us as men to men; many of them expressing satisfaction that we were "making good" and hoping for our success in tacking back to normal lives.

The words and action of this marshal so incensed Morrell that he told the incident from the platform, the marshal being in the audience.

We found Coalinga, with its oil wells, a particularly

interesting city, and spoke there twice; but it was at Fresno that the most dramatic event of our trip occurred.

We were speaking in a large hall, and under the auspices of the local Armenian society. When the call was made for volunteers to go into the jacket and "derrick" two Armenian youths responded. There was no stage in the hall, and in placing the victim in the jacket a long, heavy table was used, so that the audience might see what was being done. Morrell had placed the boy in the instrument, and was "cinching" him when an interruption occurred. From the silence of the crowd came a cry, and a young man near the rear of the hall arose to his feet and began running down the aisle toward us. He was shouting something in his native tongue, and was wildly excited. On reaching the table he shoved Morrell violently aside, and with twitching hands tried frantically to unlace the ropes. Morrell, more or less angered by the shove, in turn pushed the youth aside and endeavored to finish the "cinching." By this time there were a dozen young men surrounding us, all of them greatly excited and menacing, and all talking rapidly in Armenian. People in the audience caught the excitement and began shouting. Presently a cool young fellow pushed his way through the crowd, speaking as he approached. He seemed to be a sort of leader.

"It's his brother," he informed us in good English. "He thinks you're hurting him, and he won't stand for it. Wait a minute until I talk to them."

He turned to address the crowd, but was interrupted by the youth who had started the disturbance, who, before he could be intercepted, sprang to the inert figure on the table and again tried to undo the ropes, meanwhile uttering pathetic cries.

"I guess you'd better take the jacket off," said the

spokesman, addressing us. "They don't understand. A lot of them are asking why you didn't put an American boy in."

Morrell nodded, and quickly unlaced the victim, who got to his feet dazedly.

Meanwhile the young man who had smoothed matters, was talking to the audience in the language which most of them evidently understood better than they did English. He talked for ten minutes or more, and grew eloquent, gesticulating and stamping forcefully. As he finished there was a burst of applause, and some one in the audience suggested that we should be given to understand that no disrespect had been meant. A rising vote was taken on the question, and we were vindicated.

Later in the evening while talking with the young man who had made the impassioned speech, I asked him what he had said.

"I told them that there were Armenians in the penitentiary, and that other Armenians would go there. I also said that some of these Armenians, their fellow countrymen, might be put in the jacket, and that there wouldn't be any brother to interfere — only the gloom of the dungeon and no hope. Then I pleaded with the ones who vote to remember what they had seen and to help do away with it."

CHAPTER XLI

An unforeseen complication in my personal affairs compelled me to return to San Francisco from Fresno, leaving Morrell to fill the rest of our speaking engagements alone.

It was afternoon when I arrived at the Townsend-street station, and as I stepped into a street car I became conscious of a sense of exhilaration. At first it puzzled me, but a moment later I knew what it meant. It meant that I was "back home."

Only two cities in the United States had given me that thrill, and, strange to say, neither was my "home town." The two cities were New York — where I went to school — and San Francisco, where I had found the best friends of my life.

The following day, as I was going along Kearny Street with my head down, unnaturally observant, my arm was suddenly seized, and I looked up into a familiar face.

"Hello, Jimmy," I said, recognizing a man who had been serving twenty years for robbery when I left San Quentin. "How long have you been out?"

"I'm on parole. Been out three months, and having a hard time to 'make good.'"

"How's that?" I asked. "You look all right."

"Oh, I'm all right now," he replied, "but the first month was a caution. You see, I expected to get a job in San José, working at my trade as waiter, but the last minute the Warden told me I was to go to Sebastopol, an' work on a ranch. He asked me if I wanted to go, and of

course I said yes. I'd been waitin' three months after bein' paroled.

"They gave me 90 cents — I think it was 90 cents — to pay my fare, an' I left, full of high hopes."

"'Full of high hopes?'" I echoed. "Of course you were 'full of high hopes.' What man doesn't leave 'stir' feeling that way? Hadn't you served eight years; hadn't you —"

"No, nine years," he interrupted hastily. "Nine years an' nine days. One year don't mean much if it's all the judge hands you, but it means a lot after you've served eight. An', do you know," he added seriously, "I've always had a hunch, all my life, that nine's my lucky number, though I'd hate to do nine years more to disprove it."

"Of course it's lucky," I said, "and a man with a combination like that can't help but make good. How old are you, Jimmy, anyway?"

He thought for a moment, and then burst out with, "Well, what d'y'r think o' that. I'm 39 the 9th o' next month — wouldn't that nine you?"

"It does," I replied, taking his proffered hand and shaking it as he pushed his derby hat to the back of his head with the other hand.

I saw his face in a new light, his blue eyes were illumined by something that spelled strength.

"It does," I repeated. "You can't help but keep straight."

"Sure," he responded; "I guess that first month was good for me, but I came mighty near flopping. I —"

He stopped abruptly and regarded me with an expression akin to doubt.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "You're not afraid to trust me, are you?"

He looked me straight in the eyes.

"All the boys at San Quentin swore by you when I left," he said, "and so did I; but since I've been out I've heard you're playin' to the police. You've been seen talkin' with 'em, with plain-clothes men, an'—"

He broke off abruptly as I raised a remonstrating hand, and then added, "Now listen, I'm through. I'm goin' to live straight if I have to dig sewers, but I've got no use for coppers — I can't help it. Some of 'em may be all right — I know some of 'em are, but I don't want nothin' to do with 'em, or with anybody that hobnobs with 'em."

Following the dictates of a sudden wave of indignation I started to walk away without bidding him good-bye, but he seized my arm.

"Listen," he said. "I don't know only what I heard. I knew you when we were both jammed, an' I know you was all right then. But I was told you'd flopped to the cops."

"And what if I have; what difference to you, so long as you're making good?" I asked, so incensed that I didn't care whether he believed I'd "flopped," as he called it, or not.

"'What difference?'" he repeated, backing away as if mortally bitten. "'What difference?' Why, you'd be — you'd be a stool — a snitch — an informer."

"Well, that's what you suspect me of being, according to what you've said; why stop and talk any longer? Some 'square' guy might see us and put you into my class. But let me tell you for your own information," I added, despite my bitter disinclination to deny the rôle he had given me, "I do talk with policemen, and a lot of them are my friends. That's where a lot of you fellows fail to get yourselves solid when you turn right — you

hold a hatred for the police; and, believe me, the man who hates is hated every time. The police are necessary — you can't sidestep that if you'll stop and think for a minute. Suppose you work for six months and some one robs you of your wages. Or suppose you're held up and are being beaten into insensibility. Wouldn't a policeman look good? And in nine cases out of ten you'd want revenge on the men who robbed you. But as for being a 'stool'— well, you ought to know better. A 'stool' never works for his living — he preys. I'm working, and I've worked hard to establish a better understanding between the police and those whom they handle. If you want to keep on thinking I'm phony, I can't help it, but you're wrong."

It must have been the way in which I spoke, more than the words themselves, that made him reach for my hand.

"Forget what I said," he exclaimed. "I didn't believe it; but you know how people talk."

I was tempted to ask him who had given him the misinformation, but restrained myself with the thought that I might meet the person, and that it would be better for me not to know. Instead, I said, "You were going to tell me about the first month — the month on the ranch."

"Oh, yes," he laughed; "that's right. I can see the funny side of it now, but at the time it was no joke.

"When I got to the station there was a long-whiskered farmer with a rig waitin' for me, an' before I knew it I was ridin' out of town. The ranch was nine miles in the country, an' when I got there the first thing I did was write a letter, so's my friends 'd know I was out. But there wasn't a postage stamp on the place, an' no way to mail the letter. They only went into town twice a month or so.

"The second day the ol' fellow with the white whiskers came to me with a pair of second-hand boots.

"'You'll need these in your work,' he said. 'They're seven dollars, but that's all right; I'll take it out o' your wages.'

"I needed the boots, so took them, and for the next three weeks I worked hard. Then I learned there was a circus in town, an' made up my mind to go an' see it. I hadn't done anything but work and sleep since leavin' the pen. But when I went to the ol' man and told him I wanted a day off, he went up in th' air. He said I was on parole, an' wasn't supposed to go to circuses. But I had my mind made up to go, an' told him so.

"'Well, it's a pretty long walk to see a circus — it's eighteen miles there an' back,' he said.

"I told him I didn't care if it was eighteen thousand miles, that I was going, and that was all there was to it. When he saw that I was determined, he switched right around. He told me he wanted some things from town an' that I could take the rig. That kind o' disappointed me, for I was thinkin' of not comin' back, an' if I took the rig an' left it they might claim I stole it. But I went anyway, an' maybe I didn't enjoy that circus. I got the stuff the ol' man wanted, an' the next day I was back at work. I lasted a week longer and then went to him for my pay, tellin' him I was through; that I'd got another job while I was in town. Of course that wasn't true, but I wanted to make it strong.

"He got mad, threatened to arrest me, and made all kinds of objections, but I stayed with it.

"When I was ready to leave he handed me nineteen dollars an' said, 'What are y'r goin' t' do with them boots?'

"'Take 'em with me, of course,' I answered. 'You've

held out the seven dollars for them, haven't you? You don't suppose I'm going t' leave 'em here, do y'r?'

"'I'll give you five dollars for 'em,' he said.

"To tell y'r the truth, I didn't want the boots, for I had my mind made up to get work in a restaurant — the kind o' work I used t' do before I fell — but I wasn't goin' t' leave them there f'r him to sell over again. So the five dollars looked good to me, an' I walked the nine miles into town with twenty-four dollars in my pocket, an' it made me feel pretty good — it was the first money I'd earned for ten years.

"I struck it lucky here in Frisco — got a job the second day, an' been workin' at it ever since.

"So long, 'n take care of yourself," he added.

We shook hands again and parted. I have not seen him since.

CHAPTER XLII

My life in the office during the days immediately following my return to San Francisco was a sort of nightmare. The weeks we had spent in the country had served to emphasize the hideousness of the urban struggle for existence with which I was confronted day after day. It seemed as though all the ex-prisoners in need flocked to the office during the first week, and many of them were so miserable, so utterly cast down and hopeless that I felt myself sinking into a state of what threatened to develop into chronic gloom. A number of the men who applied for help were victims of alcohol, and it was no infrequent thing for men to appear in a semi-intoxicated condition. What struck me most forcibly was that many of the persons employed at the office took the stand that if a man had been drinking he was unworthy of consideration, and I was repeatedly assailed with the remark, "He's been drinking. Why did you help him?" after some derelict upon whom the stamp and stench of whisky were most pronounced, had left the office with a mumbled "Thank you." Of course, I realized that it was not a wise thing to give money to intoxicated men, but their distress so often seemed just as profound as that of men who were hungry for food that I couldn't resist its appeal. To have recorded all the wretched stories I heard during those days, from both men and women, would have made a second "Children of the Abyss," could the master mind have been present to write it.

Several times I contemplated giving up the work, but

was saved from finally doing so in a most unlooked-for manner. An old man who was one of our regular visitors, and who existed on the pittance we gave him, remained to talk with me one afternoon, and fell to reminiscing. He had been reared in an orphan asylum, had been a newsboy in a large city, and had finally become a professional thief. From the time he was 16 years old until he finished his last "jolt" he had been out of prison only two years, and at no one time longer than three months.

"And how old are you now," I asked, "and how long since you left Folsom this last time?"

"I'm going on 69 now," he said wearily, "but I've stuck it out nearly four months now. I don't want to go back again; God knows, I don't. I'm sick and tired of it all, an' if I had my life to live over I'd make it different. But what can I do? I can't get work that I can do, an' I ain't got a friend on earth. Sometimes when some of the young bloods make a killin' they stake me to a few dollars — kids I've met in different stirs."

He was a small, thin, wiry old man, with watery grey eyes and wispy hair. As he talked I thought how miserly fate had been, denying him of every chance, even from birth, and then followed swiftly a second thought — that his life had not been entirely wasted, not if I could get him to tell it to me in detail, and persuade the editor to publish it. Such a record might serve as a sign-post to young men at the parting of the ways.

"Will you give me the story of your life — everything?" I asked.

"What for?" he asked. "To run in the paper?"

"Yes, I think it would make a great human document."

"I'll do it provided I get my share — if my life is interesting enough for that, it's worth something to me. Would they pay me?"

"I'll find out," I told him. "Come in again in the morning." So soon as he was gone I knocked at the door of the managing editor and asked his opinion.

"Why, he's been a crook as far back as I can remember," said the big man. "I know of him, and I'd like to have seen him. If he'll tell his story it should be a good one. He's been through enough. Have him come in when he comes in the morning."

As a result of the interview on the following day it was arranged for "Old Whitie" to draw a salary each week, with the stipulation that he should spend two or three hours with me each morning. This meant that I would be away from the office half of each day, working on something that promised intense interest.

"Whitie" appeared at my apartment early next morning, having walked from the Mission, and after we had breakfast, which he helped cook, we settled down to work. One of the first things I observed was his crafty curiosity, though I didn't realize that it was "professional" until after he had gone. During that morning he had peeked into every closet and had opened every drawer in the apartment, sometimes surreptitiously, and at times openly. It was the "prowler" instinct manifesting itself.

The second day he did not seem so willing to talk. A surge of unrest kept him on his feet most of the morning, and I noted that he seemed to regard me with what appeared to be distrust. His eyes would not meet mine. It finally dawned on me that he was thinking of burglary. He was distrustful of me because he was distrusting himself.

At first I thought of coming out plainly and taxing him with what was in his mind, but dismissed the idea. There was very little of value in the apartment, and I knew my partner had no jewellery in his dresser.

At noon I suggested that we prepare some lunch, and made him eat heartily. Then I arose from the table and said:

"You look tired, Whitie; lie down on the couch. I've got to run downtown, and a little nap will do you good."

I watched his face closely without seeming to do so, as I spoke, and saw a look of consternation, almost terror, dilate his old eyes.

"Why, er — Say, you ain't goin' out an' leave me here alone, are y'r?" he asked. "I wouldn't be responsible — I might clean up the joint."

"Clean up the joint?" I repeated. "There's nothing to clean, only a few clothes and some dirty dishes; I know you wouldn't do that. Do you suppose I would leave you here if I did?"

"But I don't want to be left alone," he insisted, getting up from his chair in anxiety and pulling his faded cap from his coat pocket. "No; I'm going. Much obliged, just the same."

"But I'd like to have you stay," I insisted. "It's foolish of you to talk about robbing the place. Wouldn't I know who had done it, and didn't you say the other day that you don't want to go back to prison?"

"But you probably wouldn't make a holler — I figured on that," he admitted, becoming more and more disconcerted and edging toward the door.

I stepped forward and blocked his passage.

"Now, see here, Whitie," I declared; "you've got to stay here while I run down to the office. I promise you faithfully I won't stay long — not more than half an hour — and you've got to get used to the idea of being alone in a strange house without peeking into drawers and closets. I understand exactly how you feel — I have the same feeling myself to some extent. I expect people

to distrust me — and yet at the same time I resent it. But you've hurt me worse than anything else by unconsciously putting me into the respectable class — the class that you look upon as prey. I'm in your own class, Whitie, don't forget that; and if you want to 'clean' this place, go ahead and do it; only don't take any of the rugs or bric-a-brac — they belong to the house and I wouldn't like to have to pay for them. Also, leave the oil stove, so we can have breakfast here together in the morning."

I expected at least a smile for this sally, but the old man remained solemn as a Sphinx.

"And don't forget you're on salary," I reminded; "are you going to let that slip for the sake of a lot of junk that a second-hand man wouldn't give you ten dollars for? Why, you're feeble-minded to be afraid to stay here — afraid of yourself. You'll stay?"

I asked the question as if it was settled that he would, got my hat, and walked out.

On my way downtown I continued to think of the situation I had just passed through. Had it not been so tragic it would have been ridiculous. In all probability Whitie had not been in a strange house by himself — save for a sinister purpose — in all his life.

I was anxious to get back, but was delayed downtown and did not reach home until almost dark.

"D'y'r call this half an hour?" said the old man as I entered. "I've been doin' time, and doin' it hard, since y'r left. An' say, I never thought an ex-con could sentence another ex-con. An' it beat that twenty-five spot I did back in Sing Sing all holler. No judge ever gave me a sentence like this one. Y'r all right — y'r certainly all right!"

"You mean you're all right," I retorted, "and you've

been all right all the time. Take yourself as being as good as the next fellow and make him prove that you are."

He looked squarely at me; his eyes did not shift.

"I'll see y'r in th' mornin'," he answered, with an irrelevance that did not deceive me.

"Good night!" he called from the hall.

I watched the little bent figure shuffle out into the night.

Old Whitie had ceased to be a "criminal."

CHAPTER XLIII

For several weeks "Old Whitie" continued coming to my apartment each morning, gradually unfolding a life story which began in a foundling asylum, and passed through a maze of stirring and yet sordid crimes. From childhood he had been an enemy to the society into which he had been born without a name.

As he progressed I began to have misgivings as to the use of the story in print. In the telling of his crimes he nearly always forgot himself, forgot where he was, as with half-closed eyes he lived the scenes over. He took pride in recounting his more thrilling and desperate transgressions, and told of criminal methods — the minute detail of which was so intense and real that the printing would have been equivalent to founding an open reform school or penitentiary in the midst of everyday life. Finally I consulted with the managing editor, and after looking over the manuscript he decided that it wouldn't do, at least not for a newspaper.

It devolved upon me to acquaint "Whitie" with this decision, and I shrank from the task. I could readily understand the pride which he felt in having sometimes outwitted the police, or in having planned and executed a particularly clever or daring burglary. An incident illustrative of what I mean was the robbery of a jewellery store in a small city. "Whitie" had observed that the show window, where a number of valuable diamonds were on display, was boarded up or encased on both sides. An ingenious and original plan suggested itself to him, that of

getting into the cellar of the establishment and cutting through the floor of the window. He noted that a particularly large diamond occupied the same position in the window each day, and the plan was to cut a very small aperture through the woodwork, slit the plush mat, reach through with one finger and hook the diamond through.

But in order to accomplish the crime it was necessary for him to have a lookout to kick against the base of the window casing outside when all was clear. "Whitie" intrusted the lookout part of the plot to a man with whom he had "done time," and whom he thought was "all right"; and this man, while apparently entering into the plan with great zest, was in reality working for the police; that is, he was allowed to ply his trade of petty thievery unmolested in return for his services in telling the plainclothes men of any contemplated crime of magnitude which might come to his ears.

"Whitie" cut through the floor and slit the plush, but when he reached his finger through in response to the "all right" signal, it was seized in a pair of pincers in the hands of a detective, who had been stationed in the store and at the window for that purpose, and "Whitie" was held in this excruciating and undignified position until another detective descended into the cellar and placed him under arrest. Subsequently he was given seven years in the penitentiary for the attempted robbery. In finishing this story he got up from the couch where he had been sitting and walked the floor savagely.

"I never saw th' stool again in my life," he muttered, "but if I ever do, well, he'd better see me first, that's all."

To print stories of this nature, even to print this one, might or may incite some youth to essay the same sort of

crime; and yet, at the same time its telling may be of benefit to jewellers having careless window displays.

And so I felt backward about telling the old man that we had decided not to use his story. I felt that way because I realized, despite the fact that he had been a crook all his life, that in "Whitie" there dwelt none the less the artist-spirit; that he looked back at his "work" with something akin to the feeling a painter or sculptor experiences, or even the sense of satisfaction with which a carpenter or mason views his handiwork. "Whitie" had never had the chance to become a carpenter or mason — the only trade he knew was burglary — and he had regarded it as a trade for many years.

When I finally mustered sufficient courage to acquaint him with the fact that the story couldn't be used he sat for a minute as if stunned by a physical blow, his eyes focused on mine with an expression of reproach that I shall never forget.

"It isn't because your story isn't wonderful," I explained lamely, striving for words to make him realize that I felt as bad as he did. "But you've exposed too many of the tricks of the trade, and it would be dangerous to publish them. It would be dangerous — don't you see — it would — it would —" I stopped for lack of words, and then an idea flashed into my mind.

"Don't you see," I asked, "if what you have told me were published it would put the police wise to a lot of things they don't know, and make it harder for the boys to 'get by'? Don't —"

"Oh, don't try to hand me that," he interrupted bitterly. "If that was the reason you'd publish the story only too quick. But it's all right; why should I care whether you use it or not?"

After vainly endeavoring to pacify him I became slightly piqued.

"Do you suppose I enjoy the idea of doing all this work for nothing?" I asked. "Don't you suppose I'm disappointed, too?"

He did not reply, but pulled his cap from his pocket — he always carried it there; he had told me it was an old trick which he had learned was sometimes conducive to a "quick getaway"— and started to leave without saying good-bye. I wouldn't permit him to go that way, and finally got a half-hearted handshake from him, and his promise that he'd come to me if he needed anything.

I have not seen him from that day to this, though I know he has not returned to prison.

. . . . . .

Another interesting study of an ex-prisoner followed closely upon my experience with "Whitie."

I had decided to move out of the city, and after looking around finally settled upon a small cottage in Marin County. But in order to maintain a cottage it would be necessary to have some one to cook and take care of the place, and I engaged a middle-aged ex-prisoner for the purpose. He had been coming to the office seeking employment, and when I made him my offer he gladly accepted. I knew nothing about him save that he was in sore need and had served a short term at San Quentin.

During the first two or three weeks in this new relationship I discovered that Jess was a very interesting character. In fact, as I see more and more of life I am finding that every one is interesting, provided a close enough contact is established.

Jess had been all over the world, and had gone through two wars. He was a short man, stockily built, with a

stubby grey moustache and rather large blue eyes. His head was bald, in consequence of which he invariably wore his hat, whether in doors or out.

One day after we had been living together about a month, I sent him down to the village for groceries, and he was gone a long time. When he finally came back I noticed something peculiar in his appearance and actions. He seemed trying to avoid me, and when I started to help get supper, as was my custom, he half-shoved me to one side, saying:

"What's the matter? Ain't my cookin' good enough for you?"

The question was like a bolt from a clear sky. We had been the best of friends, with an apparently perfect understanding, and he had evinced something allied to the fidelity of a dog in his relations toward me. I had tried to discourage the manifestation, because I felt that I was his equal in every sense, and fidelity of the nature he had exhibited was embarrassing. It was therefore natural that I should have been astounded at his action.

"Why, Jess, what's the matter?" I asked. "What's happened?"

"Only this," he said, defiantly drawing a pint bottle of whisky from his hip pocket. "Have a drink."

For the first time I noted how thick his speech was, and realized that he had been drinking while down town.

"No, I don't care for any, Jess," I replied, "but you'd better let me get supper. It's all right, only I didn't know you drank."

"Didn't know I drank?" he half-snarled. "Why, damn it, it's been the curse of my life. I'd 'a' been somebody to-day — I'd never wore stripes if it hadn't been for this stuff, and — well, I've gone a month now without it; I guess I'm entitled to a lay-off for to-night."

"Of course you are if you feel that way about it," I said. "You better go out on the porch and let me get supper."

But he wouldn't listen to the suggestion, and insisted on my leaving the kitchen.

An hour later Jess served supper. It was ludicrous. From a companion he had been metamorphosed into an august butler. The food was wretchedly cooked, but he watched me so closely that I hated to say anything. Repeatedly I tried to get him to sit down and eat, but all he would say was:

"I'm a servant, sir; I'm a servant. I know my place, sir."

CHAPTER XLIV

THAT night I lay listening to the maudlin mumblings of my "servant" in the next room as he stumbled about in his visits to the whisky bottle. It was evident that he had it on one of the shelves, and I wondered why he hadn't placed it close to his bed. His condition puzzled me. I had tried to "make friends" with him during the interval between supper and bedtime, but it was only after several nips from the bottle that he condescended to talk with me, and then only in a formal way.

The next morning I got up and prepared breakfast, taking his portion to his room, but on opening the door saw that he was asleep, so I left for the city without disturbing him.

When I returned that evening I found him seated in the rays of the setting sun at the rear of the cottage. He tried to apologize for what had happened, but I wouldn't tolerate it; his acknowledgment that whisky had been the "curse of his life," when I expressed surprise the night before, had been enough for me. Besides I remembered what the big man had said when he learned that all friends had forsaken a drunkard — and Jess was not a drunkard, or at least I did not think so.

For two or three days he persisted in being humble — entirely unlike his former self — and then the same thing happened again. We had moved the day before, as I had located some friends and learned that the cottage adjacent to theirs was vacant, and when they came in to see me

that night Jess was intoxicated. They of course knew that I was an ex-prisoner — all my friends did and do, for which I was and am thankful — but they didn't know anything about Jess until he declared himself. As already intimated, it had been seared out of my nature to ever consider or treat any man or woman as a servant, or "inferior," and so, when my friends came in I introduced Jess to them as "my friend, Mr. H——." I knew he had been drinking, but thought that the presence of strangers would have a chastening, sobering effect, but was startled almost out of composure when he got up in mid-evening and made himself known. He had been sitting silently in a corner of the room, and I think it was resentment at not being noticed that prompted him to do what he did. I was engaged in putting a fresh log in the fireplace when I heard his voice and his footsteps behind me.

"No, I'll do that," he said; "that's what I'm here for," and then he turned abruptly to the others.

"I'm the servant here an' I want y' oll t' know it. An' 'nother thing I want y' t' know, 's long's y' live nex' door, is that I'm an ex-con, too, 'nd don't make any bones 'bout it; so y' c'n take me 'r leave me, jes as y'r like."

Ordinarily Jess spoke fairly good English, but when under the influence of liquor slurred his words terribly.

The man in the party immediately arose and extended his hand. "I'll take you as you are," he said, "and I'm sure the ladies will also," he added, turning to his companions.

Jess comically submitted to two more handshakes and then inconsistently asked if they wouldn't have some refreshments.

I was relieved when they declined, even after he persisted, for, so far as I knew, there wasn't a thing to eat

in the place and Jess' condition precluded the possibility of his knowing.

Several times during the weeks that followed I feared that I should be compelled to let him go, but something I couldn't understand prevailed. More than once I thought of Walt Whitman's remark on passing a drunkard in the streets of New York: "There, but for grace, go I."

On one occasion when I asked Jess to get some eggs, he remained away so long that I went out to look for him. I found him sitting in the brush half way up the hill which ascended to our cottage, but it was not until I got him on his feet that I discovered he had been sitting on the eggs. I said something about his failure at incubation, but he didn't smile. Again, one afternoon on coming back from the city earlier than usual I found the cottage locked and was obliged to enter through a window. When I was half way in, one leg dangling inside and the other out, I heard a broken voice commanding me to "throw up my hands," and on locating the source, saw Jess sitting up in his bed in an adjoining room, a revolver levelled at me.

I didn't remain to "split hairs" regarding servant and master, but promptly dropped backwards. Fortunately I struck on my shoulders and slid down the steps without injury, save to my feelings. It required an extended conversation, carried on without sight of each other, for me to identify myself and convince him that I was his self-inflicted "master." Then his apologies were profuse.

"I thought you were a burglar," he explained, crest-fallen to an extent pitiful.

"Never mind what you thought; give me that gun," I retorted. "A man who drinks and a loaded revolver is a murderous combination."

Meekly he recovered the weapon from where he had hastily hidden it under the mattress, and when I was sure

that he was not looking I secreted it in the deep picture moulding that extended all the way around the room. It was a gun which I had taken with me several times while out tramping or riding — not to kill anything, because I'm too "sentimental" for that — I have an unalterable faith, gleaned from my reading of late years, that the killing of animals or birds for "sport" is a savage manifestation — but to shoot at targets. When I read of rulers and ex-rulers of "people" finding enjoyment in the killing of animals and birds it always nettles me, despite the fact that I have occupied a cell as a criminal. At the same time I do not say they are wrong, for each human being has to "work off" inherent savagery in some manner. Otherwise we might be insane from self-suppression.

Despite Jess' failing, he had, in common with all of us, many "redeeming" qualities. One of these was a passionate love for flowers, and I do not recall a single day during the time we lived together that he did not gather a fresh bunch of wild poems for our dining-room (living-room and dining-room combined) table. He also was a great lover of dogs, and on several occasions I came close to getting into a muddle for having neighbors' pet canines domiciled in "our" kitchen and living off "the fat of the land."

But don't think I am making light of Jess — I am not. His case was tragic and I realized that I was remiss in not being severe and stern with him. Perhaps it was because my soul glimpsed the future. I don't know.

I do know that I kept Jess with me, despite the inconveniences and worse than inconveniences for which he was repeatedly responsible. One of the aspects which came to be a source of great worry to me was the fact that the townspeople finally began to clatter about the amount of

liquor being conveyed to my place. I was on parole, and hated by entrenched, or seemingly entrenched, prison political machinery. On several occasions, at Jess' insistence — in order to keep the soul-hold I felt for him, I had taken drinks. I wish I could make the psychology of the thing clear to readers. I know some will understand, while others will descend to a sneer. But, in all self-humility, if there is anything more deadly to inter-human understanding than the sneer of one human being for another, I don't know what it is.

Some one may say: "Oh, bosh. He knows he's weak. He's trying to worm his way in."

Perhaps that may be right — in fact, I guess it is right; but why shouldn't it be? "In His Steps," written years ago, and the furore which it caused in Christian circles, has not been forgotten by all Christians, nor by all convicts.

Jess was a human being, like myself, like you. As a human being, like myself, I couldn't even think of sending him back into the hopeless condition in which I had found him. I understood hopelessness too well.

Besides, he loved flowers and dogs, and in spirit loved me, and I him.

CHAPTER XLV

My friends living in the next cottage constituted a safety valve at times when Jess' vagaries distressed me. I became especially interested in Fern, a dark and winsome girl, with big, soulful brown eyes, and we spent many refreshing hours together, tramping or riding in the hills, or in the surf at Dipsea, or on the soft slopes of Tamalpais. Her voice was wonderful. She didn't talk — she purred. At first tramping the hills seemed like work, but we soon got used to it, and in a few weeks could climb without being aware of our physical bodies. I have seen a great deal of California, but know of no locality more alluring than the hills and woods and surf of Marin County. I don't write that because a gentle companion shared my pleasures there, but because I feel it. I have been drawn to Tamalpais and Muir Woods many times since, and frequently alone.

Fern was a well-named girl, possessing the wild and yet sensitive nature typified in the plant itself. It was a constant surprise to me that she seemed to like my company. I was much older, and a single glance from her dark eyes would have flattered nearly every youth within the neighborhood of her cottage. One day while we were returning from a tramp to Bolinas I asked her why she permitted me to share her presence so much.

"Because I like you," she replied. "That is," she added quickly, "I — er — well, I don't know. You think so much without saying anything, that is," she finished with an inutile laugh, "you make me think without saying anything. Why did you ask?"

"Because it seems strange that you should be with me. You know where I've been — who I am — and, well, I'm so much older, and —"

She did not permit me to finish, but jumped to her feet and ran on with a laugh. About twenty feet off she stopped and turned.

"Since my company causes you so much concern," she taunted, "I'll go home alone; that is, unless you catch me," and she darted away. I followed, of course, pretending to make an effort to catch her, until at the end of a half mile she stopped and waited. We were both out of breath, and nothing more was said about why we were together; nor did I ever refer to it again during the weeks that followed. That was nearly two years ago and Fern is still the same elusive friend. The feminine soul is too abstruse for me — I've tried a number of times since to fathom it in other "females of the species," but am as much in the dark as I was then.

After living with Jess for three months, during which time I wrote semi-weekly short stories and other special matter for the paper, I decided to move back to the city. The problem which Jess presented was solved by himself. When he learned of my intention to move he applied for and secured work as porter in a saloon. It seemed a bad environment for his weakness, but proved to be otherwise. Daily proximity to his deadly nemesis had the effect of making him abstemious, and the last time I heard of him he was in possession of himself.

Shortly after my return to the city I was assigned to the police courts, to do special writing —"sob stuff," as it is called in newspaper parlance.

I liked the work immensely, the field was prolific, and for two months I wrote several sketches each day. Many

of the things I saw and heard were never written — they couldn't be. One incident comes back vividly to me at this moment. I was going up to the jail, located on the top floor of the Hall of Justice, one morning, and in the elevator were three men, two of whom I knew were detectives, though they didn't know me. The third man was a stranger.

"Oh, yes, I saw him this morning," said one of the detectives to his colleague. "I was just up there. But he's dressed diff'rently than when when we pinched him yesterday; he must 'a' swapped clothes with some one, and he's wearing a red necktie. We should 'a' put him alone instead of letting him mix."

When the elevator stopped and we got off I discovered that the stranger was with the detectives and that he had been brought to the prison by them for the purpose of identifying a suspect. Of course, I was interested. I had "stood in line" myself and been given the "once over" by both men and women who were seeking to identify plunderers and other gentle characters. On one occasion, while in jail awaiting trial on the charge which resulted in my prison sentence, I had been "identified" as one of two men who had committed a robbery on the preceding Sunday night, and the chief jailer, who was standing in the line with myself and several other prisoners, was selected as my companion in the crime. Fortunately, I had been in jail when the crime occurred, and the jailer — well, he had an alibi; he had been on duty at the hour.

Presently a file of men emerged from the steel-bound corridor and lined up in the office. There were nine of them, of all sizes and in various stages of physical and sartorial disrespectability.

"Look 'em over carefully," said the taller of the detectives, turning to the witness. "Take your time and pick him out. He's there all right."

I looked at the faces in the line to see if I could "detect" a responsive quiver to the words, but I saw only nine graven images — eighteen vacuous eyes.

As the witness proceeded slowly from man to man I noted that his hands were clenched, and his bearing that of a man who scented prey to satisfy revenge-hunger. It was palpable that no thought of abstract justice prompted his prolonged scrutiny of each face. His shoes were run down at the heels, though he was otherwise well groomed. As he arrived at the end of the line he turned to the detectives.

"I think he's there," he said, "but I'm not certain. If you will have them speak I'll know his voice. I'll never forget that. He did a lot of unnecessary talking when he held me up."

The witness was taken to one side and a consultation held.

"You shouldn't 'a' made that crack," said one of the detectives in a low voice. "We can't make 'em talk — and besides now that you've given him his cue he's bound t' keep his trap shut. But I'll make a bluff with them, and you keep on looking them over. We've got your man — he's in that line all right."

They turned and the detective who had just spoken appealed to the prisoners.

"If you fellows are innocent, you oughtn't to be afraid to talk. I'll ask you your names."

He stepped to the man at the near-end.

"What's your name?"

Instantly every neck in the line craned toward the fel-

low who had been questioned. It was a tense moment; dramatic in fact.

The man on the end, a little fellow of uncertain age, smiled sarcastically and shook his head from side to side.

"I told you," said the detective disgustedly as he turned to the witness. "They've got rights — we can't make 'em their own jailers. You'd better take another look — a good long look."

In response the man in the slipshod shoes walked with tantalizing deliberation to the seventh sphinx.

"You're the man, aren't you?" he said, his question imbued with a positive inflection. "I know you're the man, and you don't dare deny it. You can't deny it!" he added in a sudden flare of fury.

The detectives rushed forward to prevent what might have been a blow, for the witness had raised his hand menacingly.

"Sure he's the man," said one of them, interposing himself between the prisoner and his accuser, "but let the judge hand him his trimming. You've done your part. Come on! All right, officer, take 'em back!"

From what I learned of the case subsequently I believe the accused man committed the robbery, but I have never been able to shake off the impression that his red tie "identified" him.

CHAPTER XLVI

DURING the first fortnight of my assignment to the police courts I felt the tragedy, the cold-bloodedness, the inhuman atmosphere very keenly, but as the days passed I gradually became inured, at least to some extent. What I had at first regarded as inhuman indifference I learned was nothing of the sort. All of the four judges — an inadequate number for a metropolis — and three of whom are still incumbents, revealed strong sympathies and humane qualities at most unexpected moments. They were not aware that the system which prompted them to spend half a day hearing testimony in a "speeding" case, and to sentence ten or fifteen "petty" offenders to jail in half an hour, was existent.

I recall one case particularly illustrative. It was that of a young man whose family connections were what most persons term "high."

The young man had been arrested for driving his automobile on one of the people's main streets at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour, and it was his second offence. He had an array of counsel to "fight" the case, and why shouldn't he? His father was a millionaire.

The "Court" had just disposed of ten "ordinary" cases in less than forty minutes — an average of four minutes to each case. Four of the offenders had been sent to jail for terms ranging from ten days to six months, one a woman charged with street-walking. Two had been "held to answer" on felony charges. Two had been dismissed with a reprimand, and two others had been "given probation."

It was when a lawyer went up to the judge's bench and whispered to him that the case of which I am writing was tried. The whisper to the judge resulted in its being called out of turn — probably the offender had a luncheon agreement. In responding to his name he merely arose from his seat — inside the lawyer's railing — and nodded.

The arresting officer was called and testified to the facts. He was a motorcycle policeman and had followed the defendant's automobile five blocks to register its speed. "No," there was no possibility of his "being mistaken." "Yes," he was "absolutely sure," and fully realized that he was "under oath." "Yes," he was certain that his speedometer was in "good condition."

The questions and answers seemed to incriminate the defendant, especially when the array of counsel went too far in trying to muddle the witness, who could have testified in three minutes; for they drew the dismaying statement that residents along the street where the arrest had been made had "put him on" to this particular machine, had "complained" that it was dangerous for their children to venture beyond the plebeian curb.

Several witnesses were called for the defence, the gist of whose testimony was that they knew the defendant very well, had been out with him in his "auto" and that he was a "cautious and moderate" driver.

In his own defence the young man stated that the policeman was mistaken. He was positive that he was not going beyond the speed limit.

Confidently responding to the district attorney he admitted that he had been arrested for "speeding" before, but that the case had been dismissed. Also that he had not been "warned," but had been "unwarrantedly molested" by the police on several occasions.

The addresses of counsel consumed half an hour.

Beyond "peradventure" a "grievous mistake" had been made.

The judge didn't think so, however, even though he "dismissed" the case after requesting the defendant to make sure that his speedometer was in "working order."

An hour had been consumed, during which a row of shivering wretches in the prisoner's cage were forgotten. A few minutes later court was adjourned and the prisoners went back to their cells upstairs handcuffed together in pairs. Many of them were destined to remain in jail until the next day, especially if another "important" case should come up during the afternoon session of court.

No, don't think I wanted to see the young speeder sent to jail, or even that I wanted to see him "punished." No more so than I wanted to see the defiant little street-walker get ten days, or the "opium fiend" who had stolen a doormat to get money with which to buy his deadly food sentenced to six months.

There would be other street-walkers, other speeders, other opium-fiend thieves. To punish them did no good. Not so long as they were in the grip of the monstrous hand of human greed and victims of its awful consequences.

To me the whole thing was a tragic farce.

Day after day the current flowed through that court without ebb, the same stream of "drunks," prostitutes, thieves, swindlers, speeders, panderers, "hop-heads," murderers, abandoners of children, wife-beaters, highwaymen, runaway girls and boys, and other offenders — all human beings, most of them poor, it is true, with here and there the arrogance of wealth. I could not see that headway was being made. I could not admit that punishment was a discovered cure for human weakness. I could not help feeling that the scramble for gold was what needed punishment, not its poor nor wealthy victims.

Perhaps that offends you. If so I can't help it. I'm merely telling what I saw and felt — not what was told me. And don't think, because of my own imprisonment, that there is any element of personal bitterness or rancor in what I have written. I regard my own transgressions of law, and my "punishment," as the most valuable human experience. Not because the punishment "reformed" me — I am no more "reformed" than I ever was. I am still just as capable of "straying to red hell" as I was fifteen years ago, or even before I was born. No man or woman is ever "reformed." That is unthinkable.

What do I mean? I mean that a part is the whole; that every human is potentially the "other fellow;" that life is fundamentally integral; that death is birth, and birth death; that the face you see in your mirror is God's, and not yours at all, though the eyes, by means of which you perform the functions of what we call "seeing" are responsible for your blindness, as is what we call your "brain."

I mean that human nature is not human nature, but just plain dirt and beautiful flowers. I mean that life is light, even when it is dark.

Of course I don't expect you — the you who looks into a mirror — to understand. That you is merely reading what another you has expressed in words.

Animals have no words, neither have they wealth. They get along pretty well — until domesticated. Animals are the real you — plus soul — the "knock-out" of Darwin and other conscientious "students."

I feel that 100 years hence Darwin and Wallace will be ridiculed.

How on "earth" can a soul-creature "descend"?

And please remember, I am a student, like Darwin, and you.

We all have equal "capacity" for glimpsing why we are here.

One great fore-runner of the race has yet to manifest, or suffer his mother's throes.

That is what six weeks in a police court gave me.

To-day I wish it had been composite youth instead of that blind thing which language compels me to designate as "I."

CHAPTER XLVII

Another police court picture which still lives in my mind — sentenced there for life I think — clamors for depiction.

It happened one rainy morning, after I had passed through the portals of the hall of justice with a sense of relief — relief at getting in out of the wet; anticipating dryness and comfort. But as I entered my favorite courtroom — that is, the courtroom where my favorite judge presided — I felt ashamed of myself, for there, behind the bars of the culprits' cage, was the usual smear of human dereliction and suffering. How had they felt as they had entered the same portals? Relieved? Filled with a sense of promised comfort?

Indeed not. I knew, only too well, that they yearned for the ecstasy of wind-driven raindrops.

On taking my accustomed seat, close to the witness stand — a courtesy-place which my mission had gained me — I was attracted by a woman to whose frayed skirt a three-year-old baby boy was clinging in terrorized trust. She was leaning over the barrier — the lawyers' railing which separated the rows of morbid benches from too close communication with Law.

Her eyes, too distant for me to discern their color — they were light — were fixed on a man in the prisoners' cage, a man with a disfigured face. He, too, was straining, his hands clenched to the bars.

"Till death do us part," I thought, as the words "man and wife" flashed through my brain.

I "scented" a story.

He was meanly clad — therefore a worker. She also was a worker — the clinging child proclaimed it.

I had been late in arriving — later than the judge usually was — and a case was already being heard. In its midst a Christian interruption took place. It came from the judge — as Christian things should. It came in the midst of a witness' testimony against a man accused of selling liquor without a license.

The judge had observed the woman and child.

"Let the man out of the cage," he ordered. "Let him sit with his wife and baby until his case comes up."

The policeman stationed at the bar of the cage started to obey, but stopped when the public prosecutor leaped to his feet in protest.

"Your Honor. Why, Your Honor — that's Placer — last night's hold-up case. He is under a serious charge. He's a desperate character!"

The judge winced, and then adjusted his spectacles.

"I don't care what he's under," he said. "Let him sit with his wife. The case hasn't been heard yet. This isn't a jail — it's a court of justice."

To the district attorney's added protestation the judge was adamantine and the prisoner was permitted to greet his wife and their offspring at close range and to sit with them. So far as I could determine he evinced no desire to escape. He seemed only relieved and anxious to comfort the woman.

When the case was called half an hour later I got my "story," though I didn't turn it in. I was afraid to do so, afraid that the "public" might demand the judge's recall.

The man had gone out the night before to buy food for his wife and child — without a cent in his pocket. He

was a laborer and had been out of work two weeks. On a well-lighted street he had struck a purse from the hand of a well-dressed woman — a woman who geve her testimony reluctantly — and had ran, with a mob in pursuit. His black eye explained the resistance which the arresting officer, assisted by citizens, had encountered.

"He's good for ten years at least," I thought, after the testimony, including that of the little wife to the effect that he was "a good man" and had always been "honest and true," was all in.

The judge pretended to study his calendar.

"Good for 'held to answer' and 'good-night,'" I revised mentally. The judge's hesitation, however, was not "lost."

A man with florid face and light moustache — a man with a soft voice — arose and asked if he might say a few words.

Responding to the court's nod of assent, he asked for delay.

"I think this is a case for which our new law is intended," he said; "I don't think this man is a criminal. The woman got her purse back, and I'd like to have time to investigate — not that I doubt he's industrious — but to get the facts legally established. I can do it in an hour or so. Let the case go over, if you will, till this afternoon."

It was the probation officer — an undreamed-of official twenty years ago.

The judge did not look up. It was evident that he was familiar with the voice and that the testimony of the culprit and the culprit's wife — not to mention the silent testimony of the child — had impressed him.

"Continued one week," he announced.

The district attorney's objections were smothered by

the shuffling of many feet, while the judge looked out of the window — which opened on an alley.

"Here, at last, is justice," I thought, but hastily retrenched.

It was still probable that the offender would be held to answer before a "higher" court. Another human being, in fact, thirteen other human beings, would hold the scales. Twelve would deliberate — if unworried, or not anxious to get home — and the other would solemnly pronounce sentence. Besides, the man was a laborer, without work, and would have to remain in jail seven days.

Before calling the next case the judge beckoned to the bailiff.

"Bring that woman here," he said in an undertone, as the officer drew close.

Wonderingly the woman responded to the summons, her child still clinging.

"Have you had food since last night?" asked the judge compassionately. "Has the little boy had food?"

"Oh, Your Honor, never mind that — the police saw to it, they got us a lot of groceries 's soon as they came to the room, after Henry was arrested. We've got plenty, at least for a time, but please don't send him to jail. He's a good man; honest he is." She ended with a smothered sob — the first sign of what is generally expected from a woman under such circumstances.

"There, there," soothed the judge, "don't worry. I think it will be all right. The probation officer is a good man; tell him everything. And if you need anything before next week," he added, as he reached down and patted the boy's scanty hair, "let me know; don't forget."

It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene, though only a few of us heard the words.

As the man was placed back in the prisoners' cage, after bidding his loved ones good-bye, I wondered what the outcome would be.

Weighed against these thirteen men was a lone legal innovation — the probation officer — and my intimacy with the big man for whom I worked, for I had already determined to enlist his influence, his love for fair play.

Striking a purse from a woman's hand is not fair play, but the support of a baby is. I felt that imprisonment of the striker was criminal — not he.

When the probation officer left the court room I followed and accosted him in the corridor.

"Do the best you can in that Placer case," I urged, "and count on one real and genuine people's paper for support, if it becomes necessary."

Knowing my connection he smiled freely while proffering his hand — big and florid, like his face.

"That man must not go to San Quentin," he declared. "I haven't investigated, but I know he's honest."

"What?" I laughed. "An honest thief — self-confessed?"

"Yes, an honest thief," he answered, "and I'm too old to be sentimental. I used to think a thief was a thief, but sometimes now I often think he's the honest man, and the rest of us thieves."

"But you just said you were not sentimental," I objected; "surely that's sentimental."

"No, no," he retorted in a nettled tone. "Don't think because you're an ex-prisoner that you've got the edge on all of us, because you haven't. I've read 'Put Yourself in His Place' and 'Justice' and 'Les Misérables.' I've not only read them, but I've remembered."

One week later I arrived at the courtroom before opening time, and saw the same woman and child as they came

in. I also saw the same laborer in the cage, only a week's growth of dark beard had made him take on the "desperate character" with which the district attorney had saddled him.

The prosecuting witness was not present, and the arresting officer was not sure that the accused had snatched the purse. All he had done was make the arrest.

"Case dismissed," said the judge quickly.

The prisoner bowed his thanks, not sycophantly, but with dignity — not to Judge, not to Law, but to Justice.

CHAPTER XLVIII

STANDING out clear in my mind is another picture, though totally dissimilar to that of Placer. It is the picture of an energetic little man, bespectacled and past forty, whom I saw every day at the Hall of Justice. He was there every day because his work required it, and he had been there every day for many years. His name — well, let's call him Sperry, because he's modest. Sperry was the "regular" Police Court man for *The Bulletin*.

I met him the first day I was sent to "write up" the police courts, and I didn't like him, nor did he like me — at least I felt that way. I felt that he regarded me as an intruder, as a looming successor.

Many persons believe that "first impressions" are true. I used to think so, but do not now. I have found that the initial meeting of two human beings does not always imply the appulsion of their souls; that second, third, fourth and countless subsequent "impressions" frequently — in fact, nearly always — are conducive to interunderstanding.

At any rate, such was the case with Sperry. As the days passed I came to regard him as a great spirit. I learned that he had "broken in" scores of cub reporters — many of them representatives of other papers — and that every one who knew him smiled happily when his name was mentioned. I also learned, from his own lips, that he had passed through a man's most heart-breaking struggle, and that his soul had emerged master. I also learned, from another source, that he was father of four children.

This latter fact perhaps impressed me more than anything else. It seemed to explain his sympathy, his tolerance, his charity, his understanding of the delinquents about whom it was his business to "report" each day.

We became friends — it was ordained that we should do so. From him I sponged a great deal of life. He had seen and retained much. One day, after court had adjourned, I waited in the "Press Room" until he had finished "phoning in" a story, because I happened to be interested in the case, and wanted to find out what Sperry thought about it.

It was the case of a paroled prisoner who had fallen by the wayside, and had that morning, after a hearing on a charge of petty larceny, been sent back to the penitentiary to serve out the remainder of a ten-year sentence.

When Sperry hung up the receiver I offered him a cigarette.

"No, thank you," he laughed; "I cut them out six years ago, and that's what you ought to do."

"What do you think of the Bush case?" I asked, as I struck a match, in flagrant but assumed ignorement, and lighted my minute master.

"Oh, he's guilty, all right; and he should have thought of his wife and kids. It made a good story for the papers, but I guess you know the other side, don't you?"

"The other side?" I queried. "What other side?"

"Why, the side that's never told — the side of the men who get parole and make good," he answered. "Every time a man breaks parole or probation we get a story; it makes sensational reading, but nothing is said about those who do the right thing — the fellows who work and redeem themselves."

"Do you know the percentage?" I asked, quietly.

"Sure I do — at least in this State," he responded. "It's over 80. Why don't you write something about it?"

"I will, some day," I said; "only I wish there were more people like you."

"Forget that — no flattery," he retorted. "Police court reporting is supposed to harden a man, but it doesn't always. Neither does being a policeman spoil all men. I've known them to do many kind things. I know of many cases where they've taken up collections to help out the wife and children of men in jail. I know of —"

"So do I," I interrupted. "I saw just such a case only yesterday. Don't think I don't know, and don't think I don't realize that policemen are human, just as much as you are."

"Well, I suppose we're all human at heart, no matter what we do," he said.

"All human at heart." The expression, coming spontaneously, struck me — "We're all human at heart."

Sperry, despite my first dislike of him, was one of the "unseen" flowers in life. Yes, and I have found many others.

. . . . . .

From police court reporting to the secretaryship of the Mutual Aid and Employment Bureau, established by *The Bulletin* for assisting ex-prisoners, was a violent transition, but that is what happened.

The funds of the organization were getting low; so low that a salaried secretary could no longer be retained. The big man asked me if I would undertake the task, and the proprietor of *The Bulletin* provided desk room and a telephone. I immediately prepared a statement of what had already been accomplished and spread it broadcast with an appeal for more contributions. The response was

meagre—"My Life in Prison" had faded—but with what came in the work was carried on for several months.

To recount what I lived through in that time would be harrowing. Day after day men, women and children, cripples and dements, social workers and preachers, business men and "bums" flowed in a steady and soul-sickening stream to my desk, and on.

I had thought myself charitable, but soon found out that I was not, for on many occasions, especially when men came back four or five times and asked for help, I became irritable.

"Give it up; you can't stand it. You should be writing, not dealing with individuals," my friends urged me. "You're only pandering to the social wrong," said one, a woman whom I have come to regard as a super-being. "Burn your energy in social, not individual effort. By helping the down-and-outers you're fostering the multi-millionaires; can't you see that?" she asked.

But at that time I couldn't see. I felt that a distressed or a craving soul was the universe, and that nothing else mattered. I have long since thought my way out of darkness and realize now that she was right.

CHAPTER XLIX

It was during this period that I came to know the big man more intimately. I not only saw him each working day, but frequently spent Sunday with him in the country, and I learned that his spirit, his tolerance, his love of humanity, were the result of an utter lack of self-love. I learned beyond doubt that he was genuine as gold and sincere as the sun. Quite frequently while I had been out on the road persons had asked me if he were honest in his policies and uplifting work. I have since been asked the same question scores of times. Could I take the space and were it not for what might seem indelicacy, I could write several chapters illustrating his nature. One case springs to my mind at this moment.

I was working at my desk one afternoon when I heard the big man's deep voice call my name. I looked up, and he beckoned from the doorway. In his office I was introduced to a faultlessly dressed young man with delicate features, whose bearing and appearance proclaimed him what is commonly called "a gentleman," and when the big man abruptly informed me that the visitor was an ex-convict, I was stupefied. It seemed incredible — he looked as if a night in a cell would kill him. He was fragile, delicate, refined. When he spoke the incongruity of his having worn stripes became even more pronounced. His voice was pleasing, almost soothing. A slight drawl indicated Southern parentage, as did his dreamy eyes. I have met many strange and curious characters in that office, but he capped them all. His English was perfect — almost poetic.

When I heard his story I could not help but feel that he had been grievously wronged.

He said that he had been paroled from a prison in the Middle West a few months before and had been permitted to go to Los Angeles to live. His relatives had secured an excellent position for him, and no one, so far as he knew, was aware that he was an ex-convict.

But one day he had been stopped on the street by a strange man, who saluted him with his prison name, and suggested that money was the only thing that would purchase silence. The young man, terrified at the thought of exposure and what it would mean to his relatives, paid the money. A week later the man came back for more; and then for a period of three months nearly every cent of his salary went to the blackmailer's hands. The situation became unbearable; he was almost frantic. The man had shown him a police star and announced that he was a detective. Finally the blackmailer had come to him in a hurry one morning — right into the place where he worked — and demanded $300. He needed it and must have it at once. Desperate, driven into a corner, the young man had forged a check for the amount, and had handed over the money. Then, realizing what discovery would mean, he had decided to commit suicide, and had come to San Francisco for that purpose. In his room at a local hotel he had obliterated every mark on his clothing that would identify him, and was just about to take poison when he chanced to see something about prisoners on the page of a newspaper which was lying on the dresser. He had picked the paper up and read about what the big man had done and was doing for that class, and something impelled him to come to *The Bulletin* office with his story.

In reply to a question, he stated that he did not know

the detective's name, but could easily find him on the street in Los Angeles. Also that he had written to his folks advising them of his suicidal intent. To say that the story made me indignant is a weak way of expressing what I felt. The big man was furious, but reached a quick decision.

"We'll go to Los Angeles to-night," he said. "You stay with him," he added, turning to me, "and be at the Townsend Street Station at eight."

I went with the young man to his hotel, and as soon as we entered his room I asked for the poison. He opened a drawer and handed me a small vial. It contained chloroform.

The young man was talkative and seemed greatly relieved. He showed me several of his poetical compositions, which were creditable.

"But you need not remain with me," he said as evening approached. "I'll be at the train all right."

Having an engagement, I decided to leave him, and was at the door, after shaking hands, when he called me back.

"It's embarrassing," he said, "but the fact is, well, I haven't got a cent, and I must, of course, pay for my accommodations here. I've only been here twenty-four hours. Could you loan me five dollars?"

"Certainly," I replied. "It's a pleasure."

During the evening and all the next day the case remained uppermost in my mind, and the more I thought about it the more intolerable it became.

The second morning I was again called from my desk by the big man, who had just returned from his trip. As we entered his office he turned and locked the door.

"Did you give him any money?" he asked, plunging directly into the subject, as is his custom.

"Yes — to pay his hotel bill," I answered. "Why?"

He sat down and looked out of the window before replying. Suddenly he turned.

"I've been trying to fathom the psychology of this case," he said, "but it stumps me."

"Why, what happened?" I asked.

"Only that he lied so unnecessarily. When I met him at the train here he had two orchids in his lapel, and that made me feel suspicious. But on the way down he told the story over with such minute detail and no variance that I dismissed the impression. But in Los Angeles I learned that the entire tale, or most of it, was pure fabrication. It was true that he had cashed a spurious check for $300, but he had cashed several others, and had spent the money joy-riding with women. The 'blackmailing detective' was pure figment, as was the 'excellent position' and his being a 'paroled prisoner.' I went down there with the intention of taking up the bad check and to get a line on the 'detective.' What do you make of a case like that? He deliberately accompanied me to the place where I was bound to discover the truth, talking literature and art while on the road, and when I learned the facts it didn't seem to disconcert him in the least. What do you make of it?"

"Why, he's a nut," I replied, "clean crazy, that's all. But he had the poison in his room, all right," I added, "and I believe he intended taking it. I've got the bottle in my desk, and it's the real thing; I had it tested."

This information only served to puzzle the big man still more.

"What became of him? Where is he now?" I asked.

"He's in jail; I couldn't save him. But I think you're right; he ought to be in an insane asylum instead of jail. I must see what I can do about it."

The trip had cost him close to $100, and he had been victimized, yet felt no rancor, but was ready to see "what he could do about it."

As I got up to go out he broke into a laugh.

"No wonder the orchids jarred on me," he said. "He probably spent half of your five dollars for them."

CHAPTER L

THE perplexities which constantly arose in the conduct of the employment bureau made the work arduous. One of the greatest difficulties I encountered was to get work for jobless men. It was easy enough to give a hungry man a dollar, or half a dollar, but that did not solve his problem, it merely prolonged his discouragement. Finally I evolved the plan of giving men whom I felt were in earnest — and I made many mistakes in judgment — an order on a regular employment bureau, an order guaranteeing the payment of the fee if the applicant were placed. In this manner a number of men were secured employment, and at the end of each month the employment office sent me its bill, with the proper vouchers showing that certain men had been placed at work.

One day a partner in this employment firm called on me.

"You're getting the bunk in lots of cases," he said. "Lots of men are getting orders from you and are peddling them down on Howard Street.

"Peddling them?" I queried. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you give John Jones an order on me, saying he's a cook or a blacksmith. If we place John Jones on the strength of your order it means a fee of $1.50 or $2, so the order is really worth that much in cash. John Jones doesn't want work at all; he wants what money he can get without working. So he brings your order down, talks with various men about the employment places, and finds a man who really does want work and has money to pay a fee. He offers this man your order for 50 or 75

cents, and by taking it the man saves that much, or more, don't you see?

"Not only that," he added, "but it euchres us out of a regular fee. And we've made a reduction in our rates for you, remember."

What he had told me was a revelation, and also something of a shock. I had learned from experience not to give men the money to pay the fee and had thought my arrangement with the employment firm had precluded the possibility of my being hoodwinked by men who were not in earnest.

"Well, what can be done to stop it?" I asked my visitor.

"I'd suggest that you have each applicant sign the order you give him. Then you put it in an envelope, seal it, and when we open the sealed envelope we will require him to sign his name again and compare the signatures."

This plan was adopted and worked well.

I have already intimated that I was obliged to judge whether applicants were worthy or unworthy, and I found that responsibility the stupendous feature of the work. It was the depleted treasury that compelled this judgment — the old story of economic pressure. Had the funds been ample I should not have hesitated; I should at least have given each man an order for work, no matter if a few of them were not in earnest. But to pick out the worthy from the unworthy was an appalling task — it filled me with a sense of terror. I might deny a man who meant well, and he might go out and hold some one up. In that event would I not be responsible? Sometimes I tried to console myself with the thought that it was the lack of funds that would be responsible, but even with that thought I felt that I was carrying a big burden — the possible salvation or damnation of human creatures. Per-

haps some physical defect, or an unprepossessing appearance, might influence my judgment. When that thought came to me I determined to help every man toward whom I felt any degree of antipathy on seeing or meeting him. That, of course, was inconsistent — and yet it wasn't.

The bureau had been established and was being maintained for helping ex-prisoners, but it was dismaying to find many men who had never been where they could touch opposite sides of a "room" simultaneously coming for assistance. And it was a positive torture to deny them.

"What? Have I got to be an ex-con, an ex-thief, an ex-murderer, in order to keep from starving, and to get work?" was a question scornfully hurled at me many times.

Then I would try to explain that all relief work of the nature had to be specific. That a bureau established to help fallen women, for instance, could not expend its funds for women who had not fallen. It wouldn't be right, especially toward those who had contributed to the fund which had been solicited for that special purpose. Still, even after this explanation, many of the applicants who had never been in prison remained resentful, and I usually finished by giving a quarter or a half dollar, sometimes out of the fund, sometimes out of my pocket. It was a heart-racking job, that's all. Had I been in a position to help every applicant it would have been a joy, but as it was, I often went to bed at night with a terrible feeling that I might have sent one man to hell during the day.

A number of men who applied for work declared they were ex-convicts when they were not. That fact impressed me deeply, and I almost always helped such men. What more terrific indictment of our industrial system can be imagined than that men who had never suffered imprisonment were willing to take on the stigma insepara-

ble from the ex-convict in order to get work, or food? Of course, I do not write that question from my own viewpoint, because to me an ex-convict is as good and as bad as myself — he can't help but be.

It was nearly always an easy matter for me to establish the fact that such applicants were fabricating, for I knew what questions to ask in order to learn if a man had really "done time." I made it a point to help the men who made this desperate plunge, because, somehow, I felt that they must be in earnest.

Another problem which confronted us, and by us I mean Frederick W. Ely, the labor editor of *The Bulletin*, and myself, was what we should do with men who claimed to have served sentences in other States — and many of the applicants had. We had eliminated, to a great extent, those who were not ex-prisoners, because of low funds. Was it not equally necessary to narrow the help still further? We decided that it was, and ex-prisoners from other States were, in most cases, turned away. Added to all this was the fact that no one seemed to realize that conducting the bureau on a shoestring was arduous, and neither Mr. Ely — who was treasurer — nor myself drew a salary, save what we got for our newspaper work. And it is really incumbent on me to state that had it not been for the treasurer's help, his patience, his willingness to listen to stories of suffering, even when his regular work required immediate attention, I should not have lasted the situation out. Credit — if credit can ever be said to be due — must be given to him equally with myself; in fact, I think perhaps more to him, for he had his daily columns to prepare and was also constantly engaged in seeking relief for persons with whom he came in contact while covering his labor "beat."

Added to all this was the distress of indigent women,

who learned of the bureau without understanding its exclusive purpose, and came as if to a regular charitable organization. Time and again I have seen not only the big man, but many others connected with the staff of the paper, go down into their own pockets to relieve the hunger of women and children.

Of course, a great many human-interest stories came to our notice, and I shall tell of one case in which the man whom we helped became the victim of rank injustice, and barely escaped returning to prison after he had been placed in a good paying position and was living an "honest" life.

CHAPTER LI

In "My Life in Prison" I related in detail the escape and capture of two prisoners from the rock quarry, but in order to give you a glimpse into the character of the man whose story I am about to tell I am going to recount the escape, briefly. The man's name begins with an H, so I'll call him Hall for convenience.

A strong man physically, and a willing worker, Hall was taken from the jute mill and assigned to the quarry, outside the prison walls, where he soon became "powder man." One of his duties was to prepare and set off blasts. Being an observer, he noticed that the guards, stationed around the quarry with rifles invariably watched for the explosion instead of watching the prisoners when a blast took place, and one afternoon, after he had lighted a fuse, he and a companion, instead of stopping at the usual distance, kept on going, and got over the hill without being observed. Hall had cut the fuse longer than usual, in order to have plenty of time.

Both men were captured a few hours later and returned to the prison. As a punishment for the offence they were severely strait-jacketed, and also had their credits for good behavior cancelled. Hall was serving fifteen years, and when I left San Quentin he had several years yet to suffer. But by industry and obedience he secured another trusted position, and after he had served a year of his forfeited "good time" was pardoned by the Board of Directors and discharged.

The morning he came into *The Bulletin* office I was

startled. I knew he had "lost his credits" and I thought he was still in prison.

"Another escape?" I asked quickly. "If so, keep on going; this place is too public."

He laughed and explained what had occurred, what the Board of Directors had done. "And I'm going straight," he added. "No more of the crooked game for me. I'm through with it. Can you get me a job?"

Knowing him to be an excellent worker, I made a special effort, and the next day succeeded in getting him a place as foreman of a small ranch which had recently been purchased by the wife of the big man. Hall had a natural inclination for farming, and had spent each evening during the closing years of his imprisonment in studying the subject. He felt sure that he could "fill the bill." He was given travelling expenses and half of his first month's wages, and left for the ranch.

Ten days later the lady received a letter, in which Hall stated that he had discovered his inability, that his lack of practical experience at farming had proved insuperable, that he could not conscientiously take her money for work he was incapable of doing. He had secured another position, in a fruit cannery near San José.

The letter contained a money order representing part of the money which had been advanced to him, and stated further that he would remit the balance as soon as he could.

Naturally, we were all astonished. According to accepted business ethics, he was entitled to pay for the days he had spent at the ranch, and also to the transportation, but according to his standard it would be taking money under false pretences.

"And yet ex-prisoners are generally looked upon as scoundrels," mused the big man.

One month later Hall remitted the balance of the money which had been advanced to him. His letter was full of optimism. He was working and the future was bright with promise. The money was returned to him with an urgent request that he keep it; that it was rightfully his. Three months passed, and in the immediacy of other cases Hall was forgotten. Then came the dénouement.

I was sitting at my desk one morning questioning a seedy applicant when I heard a familiar voice behind me. Turning, my eyes encountered Hall, and one glance sufficed to apprise me that something unusual had happened to him. His face, naturally pleasing, was drawn and desperate. His appearance was that of a man in the throes of despair.

Dismissing the man with whom I had been talking, I asked Hall to sit down.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Yes — what's the matter?" he mocked. "Nothing's the matter except that I'm going back to the old game. I've got six dollars in my kick, and I'm going to buy me a gun and do business — real business — and God help the man that resists. But first I want you people to know what happened. I got a fair start through you and the others, and it's no more than right that you ought to know."

Despite the fact that I was consumed with curiosity, I realized that he must be calmed before telling what he had on his mind.

"So long as you're going back to the stick-up game, why not start here?" I asked. "There's thirty dollars or so in the drawer. See, here it is," I added, showing it to him.

"But I haven't bought the smoke-wagon yet," he half laughed. "Don't hurry me — I'll get there fast enough."

"But why all this excitement?" I asked. "You've got me curious."

His face grew serious, and he placed his hand on my arm.

"Lowrie," he said, "there's no chance for an ex-con. I didn't used to believe that; I used to think it was all bull when a guy came back to the pen with a hard-luck tale; but I've got mine, and it's true. They won't let you live straight, the —— ——."

He finished with an oath.

"Who?" I inquired.

"The bulls — the police!" he snarled with another oath.

To recount in detail the conversation which followed would be tedious. I'll tell the story in my own words.

He had secured the position at the cannery during the busy season, and had proved so efficient that he had been rapidly promoted. In a few days he was foreman of a department, with a hundred employees — most of them women — under him. Encouraged, he had rented a cottage, bought furniture — on the instalment plan — and had started living with his father and sister, for both of whom he had sent transportation from a distant city. His father — a veteran of the Civil War — got an increase in pension soon after the little home was established, and his sister had secured work as cashier in a meat market. They were happy, and fortune seemed to be glad with them. When the "slack season" came he had been retained to do odd work, and the furniture bill was rapidly being liquidated.

But "last Sunday morning" (it was Tuesday when I heard the story) he had been standing at the corner near his home and another ex-convict, happening by, had stopped to chat. Perhaps ex-convicts should not stop on

street corners to chat; many have been arrested in consequence of such fellowship. But it is natural for them to do it. With whom else save an ex-convict can the average ex-convict feel at ease?

While they had been talking they had been interrupted by a man who demanded to know why they were standing there.

The man was a stranger to Hall, and had been told that it was "none of his business," whereupon a detective's badge had been "flashed," and the two men placed under arrest.

Hall's aged father, sitting on their little veranda, had witnessed the detective handcuffing the pair together, and had tottered to the corner, only to be told to mind his business or he would "go along, too."

And he had gone along — of his own volition — in the patrol wagon to the police station, where his son was booked as a "suspicious character," despite the old man's lamentations.

Investigating to disprove the prisoner's assertion that he was "an honest working man," the detectives learned and divulged the fact that he was an ex-convict, and it was bruited throughout the neighborhood. Some of the women and girls over whom he had been foreman were horrified, while others declared they didn't care — that he had treated them right and had acted like a man, no matter what he had been.

CHAPTER LII

After being kept in jail thirty hours Hall was released, and on arriving at home had bade his father and sister good-bye. To their pleadings and protestations he had been deaf. It was useless. He couldn't endure the thought of meeting the people who had liked him. He couldn't face the consequences of past sin.

And here let me digress for a moment. Only the other day I read an editorial in a Salt Lake City newspaper which proclaimed that it was good for ex-convicts to suffer, to be exposed, to be driven back to crime.

"Why?" you ask, the same as I did.

Well, according to the editorial, such a fate for the wrongdoer was merely an additional warning to young men who might be tempted to commit crime. It would make them realize that the penalty of discovery meant ostracism from human fellowship for life.

Coincidently the same paper published a chapter of Julian Hawthorne's bilious prison indictment.

As Hall finished his story I arose from my chair.

"Come with me," I said. "Mr. Older may be busy, but I'm sure he'll see you, and I want you to tell him just what you've told me."

Hall's square jaws quivered.

"No, I don't want to bother him," he objected. "I just want you people to know, so's you'll understand if I go back. You helped me when I came out and I tried to help myself. I just don't want you to think I'm ungrateful, that's all. I'm going downstairs now for a drink and then for the 'smoke wagon.'"

"Nothing of the kind," I insisted. "You're going to tell your story to Mr. Older."

"Oh, all right," he agreed in a what's-the-use tone, "but it won't stop the hair-trigger. My mind's made up on that."

The big man was busy, as I had thought, but nevertheless gave us a hearing, which encroached on an hour of his time.

When the story was concluded the second time Hall was persuaded to "go slow," and a promise was secured from him that he would come back the next morning.

After he had gone the big man called me back into his office.

"There are always two sides to everything," he said. "I don't doubt Hall's word, but call up S—— (the arresting detective) at San José, and get his version."

Instead of telephoning myself I got one of the other reporters to do it, because I felt that if S—— learned that I was talking to him he might "clam." But I was present at our end of the conversation.

S—— admitted that Hall's account was substantially true, and expressed regret for his mistake.

"If you folks are going to get him another job, I'll recommend him," he said; "I investigated and found that he is a good worker."

In making that statement and recommendation the detective clearly condemned himself, or rather the system under which he got his daily bread. He proved himself to be as great a victim as Hall.

The story was published in that afternoon's paper, but of course it has long since been forgotten.

Before Hall's appearance the next morning arrangements had been completed for him to go to work. We

had learned that in urgent cases one San Franciscan could always be relied upon to "scare up" a job.

"A rich philanthropist? A public benefactor? A minister of the Gospel?"

Not at all. Merely a representative citizen, a man who occasionally referees prize-fights, and is known as "the honest horseshoer."

No, I'm not decrying churches or "philanthropists." I'm merely telling what happened.

When Hall came in he was calm — the night hours had dulled his desperation — and when he learned that work had already been secured for him he smiled in relief.

"Sure, I'll take it," he announced, rising from his seat and striding the small room. "Sure, and what's more, I'll make good again, if they'll let me."

"They" did let him, because the big man saw to it that "they" should. The job wasn't much, merely tab-keeper in a poolroom, but Hall proved faithful, and remained until he was offered a position in a lumber camp, out in God's wilderness — where he now is.

. . . . . .

Nearly all of the ex-prisoners who applied for help were broken in spirit, unable to look their fellow creatures in the face, fearful that their stripes still showed, and I gradually learned that this condition of mind was inimical to self-redemption. It was the result of prison system, of suppression, of abnormal cell life, of being forced to cower before brass buttons and loaded canes. It made me realize more than ever before that the only way to reach a fellow man is to reach for one's self within him. One plan which I found very successful was to pretend that I was short of silver and ask the applicant to go out and change five or ten dollars for me. The study of faces under this

test was a revelation. In almost every case the man would at first shrink, more or less imperceptibly, and then evince pride, as he extended his hand confidently to take the gold-piece. The change in each man as he returned with the money was pronounced. Something — a rag, a dirty garment, a cloak of shame — seemed to have dropped away. The psychology of the thing was terrifically depressing, and yet it meant the first glimmering of self-respect for many men.

Repeatedly I was warned that "some guy" would "do me," but paid no attention.

One man did fail to return with the change — that is, he didn't come back in person. But six weeks later I got a letter from him in which was enclosed a money order for five dollars. It stated that he had never felt so "cheap" in his life, and that he had not been able to rest. He had secured work as a hop-picker, and was sending part of his first wages.

. . . . . .

It was about this time that I received an offer for two weeks' appearance at the Majestic and Republic theatres in San Francisco, and the Broadway in Oakland. The inducement offered was $150 a week, and I accepted. The salary would finance the bureau for a time, and at the same time the engagement would afford me a fortnight's opportunity to reach theatregoers with my creed.

The first night at the Majestic, out in the Mission, I witnessed all the world's stage. One of the girl performers, while standing in the wings, ready to go on with her "turn" was handed a telegram, and on reading its contents burst into tears. At first she would not permit any one to see the telegram, but the stage manager finally got it from her. It was a message that her baby was dead.

The picture she presented in her fancy costume, with tears furrowing her make-up, is sentenced for life in my brain cells.

"He was all I had," she sobbed again and again. "He was all I had."

Her paroxysm of grief ceased as suddenly as it had begun — the orchestra was playing her introductory music. Hastily snatching a powder puff, which another woman performer was proffering, she rubbed it rapidly over her face — and then danced out before the footlights and the audience.

As I watched her performance, fascinated, I recalled having read a story about a clown who had received just such a message as he was about to enter the circus ring, and that he had made the spectators laugh more heartily than usual, while his heart was breaking.

The story had been absorbing, but here was a parallel case in real life. As the girl continued her performanc I remembered that the clown, in the story, had expired immediately following his withdrawal from the eyes of the people whom he had entertained, and I wondered if the parallel would live.

But the woman, ignoring her encore, rushed past us with a set face, and softly closed the door of her dressing room.

CHAPTER LIII

To be "held up" and beaten into insensibility is an unusual experience among ex-prisoners, but it happened to me. It occurred the night which closed my second week's theatrical engagement, and while I was on my way home. It was approaching midnight when I got back from Oakland, but I was nevertheless wide-awake and nervous. Most persons imagine a performer's life is roses, but even that of the "straight" man — the fellow who doesn't have to change clothes or make up — is a nervous strain.

Despite the late hour I decided not to take a car, but to walk home, and started up Sacramento Street with the thought that the walk to Leavenworth Street, where I lived, would tire me physically and induce sleep.

Passing a saloon at the corner of Kearny Street I noticed several "suspicious looking characters" loitering at the curb, but no thought of possible injury or of being held up entered my mind. I was still thinking of bed, and wondering if I would be able to sleep.

Going up the hill I heard footsteps behind me, and turned. I saw a man in a derby hat, shorter than myself, but equally slender. Slenderness of person always appeals to me, so I felt a fellowship. He was about forty feet behind me — too far away for me to discern his features.

When I was half a block from the Fairmont Hotel a voice, close and menacing, spoke at my ear.

"I want everything you've got!" it said.

I am positive that those were the exact words, though what followed is nebulous in my mind.

I turned in surprise and received a terrific blow in the mouth. It staggered me, and had I not been standing with my back to the incline of the hill it would have knocked me down. Enraged at the unwarranted nature of the act, I lost all sense of reasoning and struck back, or tried to. It was a foolish thing to do, but had my assailant merely told me to hold up my hands I should have obeyed. As it was he had smashed my reason as well as my teeth. A second blow made me reel, but I was aroused to fight. Besides he was below me, and the hill was steep. I had the advantage of position. What I didn't have, however, was the advantage of a weapon. He was striking with a revolver, and his first blow had so dazed me that my efforts to strike him were ineffectual. A third blow, on the right temple, laid me low, and I was fatally conscious of being roughly dragged off the sidewalk and tumbled into the ruins of a cellar — the remains of a building which had been razed in the great conflagration. I remember making a final effort to fight and of receiving a blow which seemed to split my head. Not a word save his demand had been spoken. I had not thought of calling for assistance.

Despite the force of the last blow I did not lapse to complete unconsciousness, though I was incapable of moving. I knew when his hand was thrust into my trousers' pocket, and my eyes were open when he nimbly vaulted to the sidewalk above and disappeared like a shadow.

How long I remained in my semi-stupor I do not know. I know I made repeated efforts to get to my feet before I finally succeeded, and that I was obliged to lean against the cellar wall for a long time, struggling to get control of my physical functions. While standing there I felt

something warm running down my forehead and into my eyes, and realized that I was bleeding profusely. By the rays of a distant street lamp I discerned a place where I thought I might climb up to the sidewalk, and on taking my first step I was reminded that I had not my hat because my foot kicked it.

"This must not be known," was my first really cool thought, as I staggered up the hill. "I must try to get home without being seen."

Walking, which at first made me feel ill and faint, grew easier as I progressed, keeping watch for pedestrians or a policeman. Passing the corners was the menace. I could see that Sacramento Street was deserted, but I might meet some one coming from the cross streets. Fortune was with me, for I didn't meet a soul, nor did I see a policeman.

When I arrived at the door of the apartment house where I lived I discovered that I would be unable to get in without arousing the friends with whom I boarded—the robber, in addition to taking $110 in cash had also blunderingly taken my keys. Forty dollars in currency were still intact in my vest pocket, however, and I had my watch. I had been paid $150 before leaving the theatre that night, and it is possible that I had been followed all the way from Oakland, though I don't lean to that theory.

As I stood in the vestibule, waiting for a response to my ring, I felt faint again. A small panel mirror close by revealed that my face and clothing were covered with congealed blood and my lips terribly swollen. I realized that I was seriously hurt.

When Mrs. G——, the wife of the friend with whom I was living, and the mother of Fern, opened the door and

saw me she screamed faintly and impulsively shut me out. But when I spoke and she recognized my voice she reopened the door and reached my arm.

"Come in, come in quick," she said. "For God's sake, what's happened? And Henry isn't home, either," she added, referring to her husband.

"Speak, man, tell me, tell me what's happened."

"Held up," I said thickly, for blood had accumulated in my mouth while I had been waiting in the vestibule where there was no place to expectorate.

She asked another question as we entered the apartment, but I was obliged to point to my mouth, for I couldn't reply. As soon as we were inside I went to the kitchen and she followed. After relieving myself at the slop can I turned.

"No one must know about this," I said; "I don't want the notoriety just now, and besides it would hurt the cause."

"But what did you lose, and aren't you going to tell the police?" she asked.

"No, by all means no," I said. "I think I've lost some teeth, and my head feels queer, but after I've washed up I guess I'll be all right."

"You'll be nothing of the kind," she said. "You're badly hurt, and I am going to telephone for a doctor. Why, those places on your chin and temple would disfigure you for life! They've got to be sewed up."

At first I protested against having a doctor, but on washing away the blood, saw that she was right, and permitted her to telephone. While we were waiting for the doctor to come she called Fern, despite my protest, and when the girl came in a moment later, dainty in wrapper and slippers, her big eyes took on the proportion of silver dollars and her concern was gratifying.

So soon as the doctor arrived I exacted a promise from him that he would not divulge what had occurred. He gave it reluctantly; he was very indignant.

"Another half inch back," he said grimly as he stitched the wound on my temple, "and you'd had no more use for a doctor's services."

He shaved the hair from the vicinity of the wound on my skull and felt for a fracture before sewing it up. Two other places had to be sewed, one on my chin and the other under my lower lip, and a week later, so soon as I was able to venture out — for a fever had complicated my healing — a dentist treated and saved my front teeth, which were very loose, and one of which was broken.

Somehow the story leaked out, though not until weeks later, and my friends, especially ex-prisoners, wanted to ferret the underworld to find out who had robbed me. But I would not permit it. In the first place, I didn't want the man punished — that would be revenge; in the second place, a term in San Quentin would do him no good — the system was wrong; in the third place, I could no more have identified him than you could, not even had he spoken to me. Perhaps he has since spoken to me, for all I know. It is possible, yes, even probable, that he may read this account of what he did that night. I want to say for his benefit that he was very unprofessional, his work was that of a bungler, and he came close to being a murderer, according to the surgeon. The beating he gave me was unfair, and he struck the first blow before I resisted. Had he given me time I should have raised my hands in the approved style under such circumstances. Naturally, I feel some bitterness toward him; I would not be human if I didn't.

CHAPTER LIV

And now the story of Tim O'Grady, and I use his right name — at least, the name he went under in prison — because I know Tim doesn't care. Not quite tall, thin and sinewy, grey eyes and a square chin, a drawl in his voice and a semi-shuffle in his stride, and you have his picture, as words will paint it. Tim was a three-time-loser, and his prison record was as bad as his record outside. A dare-devil, plunging spirit kept him in trouble nearly all the time. During the period when I knew him in San Quentin I don't believe he ever had his "privileges" more than a week at a time, and I furnished him with countless cigarettes in consequence. One of the "privileges" is a weekly ration of tobacco, and Tim had to depend on his friends and acquaintances for his smokes. He spent a good part of the time in the dungeon, and it was he who jumped out from the crowd of prisoners the day Governor West of Oregon visited San Quentin and proposed three cheers, which were lustily given — an unheard-of breach of prison discipline. Nor was he punished for exhibiting a natural and harmless enthusiasm.

Despite his lawlessness, in prison and out, everybody liked Tim. His disposition was sunny, he took punishment with a smile and never cringed when caught doing wrong.

After leaving San Quentin Tim faded from my mind, and I had forgotten him. Then one morning he walked into the office with a trained linnet perched on his shoulder.

"Hello, Tim, when did they unchain you again?" I asked, jumping up and shaking hands vigorously.

"Oh, this morning," he replied laconically. "My time was up an' they had t' let me go, much as they hated t' do it."

"And where did you get the bird?" I asked. "You didn't come across the bay with it on your shoulder, did you?"

"Sure, I did, and y'r ought t'r seen the yaps gander. Y'r'd thought they'd never seen a bird before in their lives. I told 'em it was a jail-bird just out o' th' big house, an' that made 'em laugh. One young lady had the nerve t' ask me t' give it t' her, and what d'y'r s'pose I tol' her?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," I said expectantly. "What did you tell her?"

"I tol' her she could have the bird if she'd take me, too, an' it 'ud done y'r heart good t'r heard the yaps laugh, an' t'r seen th' way she turned red an' beat it. I felt sorry's soon's I said it, but it was too late — it slipped out quick-like before I thought."

"What's the bird's name?" I asked.

"I named him Tim, after m'self. I couldn't think o' anything better. But say," he asked abruptly, "where's this guy they call Older? I want 'a' see him."

"And he wants to see you," I replied quickly.

"Wants to see me?" he queried. "Why he never heard o' me in his life; unless, maybe I touched him f'r his watch 'r somethin' sometime without knowin' who he was."

"Well, he wants to see you, just the same," I repeated. "Wait a minute until I see if he's busy."

I knew very well that the big man would enjoy meeting Tim; he was a distinct type, had been a crook all his life, yet was honest as heaven. That means Tim, not the big man.

When I explained matters an interview was granted, at which I was present.

"So you're Mr. Older," said Tim. "I just dropped in t' pay m' respects, an' t' offer y'r a li'le present. It's really from me, but it might just's well be from all the boys over there, 'cause I know they all feel the same. 'Tain't much, an' yet it is — it means partin' with a friend. Here, I want y'r t' take this bird. He's a dandy, he c'n sing somethin' great, an' he's 's smart 's they make 'em. There's some class t' him, believe me." The bird was perched on Tim's forefinger, its pretty head cocked to one side, as it was proffered.

"But I wouldn't take your bird," said the big man. "You're attached to it, an' besides I don't believe in caging anything."

"But y'r won't have t' keep him in a cage," urged Tim; "I don't have t'r. He'll get used t' y'r in a few days, an' after that he'll be all right. I raised him and trained him with th' idea of givin' him t' you, and if y'r don't take him I'll feel bad about it. Besides," he added earnestly, "I can't take care of him outside. I've got t' rustle f'r m'self, an' I can't take Tim int'r places where I'll have t' go. Ain't y'r got a wife?" he asked brightly, as a new thought came to him. "She'd be crazy over Tim in a week, I know she would."

The upshot was that little Tim changed hands and went to live in a hotel, where his former owner was received as a visitor several times, proving to be as interesting to the new owners of the bird as did the linnet itself. But a few days after taking up its new quarters one of the windows was inadvertently left open and the bird escaped, much to the regret of every one concerned, especially Tim.

Of course Tim was urged to "go straight," and promised to do so. When offered money on which to live until

a job could be secured for him, or until he got one for himself, he scornfully refused to take it, and it required the combined persuasion of several persons before he consented to accept it "as a loan." Be it known that he subsequently paid it back, after he had got work as a waiter in a small restaurant.

Several weeks passed, and with the exception of the day he came into the office to refund the loan we did not see nor did we hear of Tim. He had left his place in the restaurant. And then one morning, when I was at the police court on a special mission, Tim smiled at me from the prisoners' cage and beckoned for me to come over.

I knew better than to express surprise, and when he stuck his hand out between the bars for a shake I merely said, "What have they got you for?"

"Robbery," he half gulped; "but, say, I'm 's inn'cent 's a baby's rattle, honest t' God I am. You know I ain't no yelper, but this time they've got me wrong, an' I want you folks to square it."

The circumstances of the crime, which I learned from Tim and by questioning the police downstairs, were that he had been arrested in a dark alley on the Barbary Coast the previous night just after an Italian had been held up by footpads and his arm broken by them before they relieved him of $40. The money was not found on Tim's person, but some one had seen a man of his description dart into the alley immediately after the crime, and Tim could give no account of why he was there. Added to this was the fact that the Italian who had been robbed thought Tim was one of the men, though he wasn't positive.

"But that isn't the worst," concluded the policeman. "He's an ex-con, a three-time loser, an' he's been pinched here in San Francisco more times than you've got fingers an' toes. It's a dead case; nothin' to it. By the time the

trial comes up the Italian'll remember. If y'r a friend of Tim's y'r better tell him to take a plea an' get off light. They'll probably let him off with a five-spot if he pleads guilty."

"Let him off with a five-spot," I mused on the street car as I made my way back to the office. "Let him off with a five-spot," for what? For being guilty of robbery? Why, no, that wasn't really the charge against Tim. He was charged principally with being an ex-convict.

CHAPTER LV

In citing the facts of the case to the big man a few minutes later I felt dubious. I felt that Tim was in a tight place, from which it would be difficult to extricate him. But when the big man heard the story he declared that he would exert himself to secure Tim's release, and telephoned at once to the chief of police, with whom he made an appointment. I accompanied him that afternoon to the Hall of Justice, where we saw Tim in the prison upstairs. The chief, after hearing the story of Tim's bird, which was told to explain how we had become interested in him, promised to do what he could, and a meeting was arranged for the next afternoon in his office.

I was present when this meeting took place and witnessed an act which I have never seen in a play. The average person's conception of a police chief is a bulldozing, brutal-visaged individual, deficient in heart and devoid of mercy — a conception due to melodrama, as many erroneous impressions are. In real life chiefs of police and policemen in general are plain and ordinary beings — fathers of families, brothers or sons of women, often with women's understanding and kindly impulses. I cannot too often emphasize that policemen and their officers are often maligned; my "crooked" and "conventional" experiences compel the acknowledgment. And yet something which I saw only the other night would seem to indicate how sadly this view diverges from the popular one. I was on the front apron of a ferry boat, which was nearing its slip, and pondering California's "Welcome to the

World — Panama-Pacific Exposition 1915," when my attention was attracted by a small black-haired girl who was tugging at the strap of my suit case.

"Don't do that," admonished the child's mother, and when the child failed to heed the words, added, "Very well, I'll hand you to the first policeman I see."

With a shriek of terror the little one seized her mother's skirt and began crying bitterly.

The word "policeman" had proved terrifying. And yet a policeman should be regarded by children as a friend, not an enemy. Parents should so teach their children. If they did so a much better understanding between the public and the police would prevail.

But to return to the office of the chief of police and what transpired there.

"I've sent upstairs for O'Grady," the chief informed us as we were ushered into his presence. "I think a mistake has been made in the case, and that he'll get clear when his hearing occurs in the Police Court. It's been set for day after to-morrow."

Presently a door opened, and Tim, accompanied by a policeman, appeared. He was handcuffed.

"Take off those cuffs," ordered the chief, addressing Tim's custodian. "They're not necessary, are they, Tim?"

"Not unless you think so," replied Tim as the policeman removed the manacles.

"Sit down, Tim," said the chief; "I want to have a talk with you."

During the conversation which followed Tim stoutly maintained that he was innocent of the charge which had been placed against him, and succeeded in convincing the chief that he was telling the truth.

"All right, Tim," the chief finally announced, "I guess you've got a chance, but if you get out of this try and straighten up, and keep away from the 'coast.'"

As Tim arose the policeman produced the handcuffs, and was about to place them on the prisoner, when the chief interfered.

"No, don't handcuff him," he said quickly, and then rising himself he walked over to where Tim was standing.

"What will you do, Tim," he asked, "if I tell you to go back up to the jail alone?"

"Why, er — why I'll 'beat it,' said Tim with a grin, "but there's no chance of y'r doin' that."

"I understand you've got a reputation for keeping your word, that you're considered as a 'square guy' amongst the boys. Suppose I ASK you to go back to the jail alone, and you promise me that you will, how about it then?"

"Why, er, why I'd go, of course," replied Tim, "but don't make me do that; it'd be pretty tough t' make m'self m' own jailer."

"Well, I'm going to ask you to do it just the same," said the chief. "Will you go up stairs and report at the jail for admission?"

Tim's inward struggle was mirrored in his face.

"Yes, I'll do it," he said finally.

"Good," said the chief. "You can go now. You know the way, don't you?"

"I oughter," grinned Tim; "I've been up there enough."

When Tim passed out the policeman started to follow, but the chief called him back. "No, let him go up alone. It will be good for him."

He took up his desk telephone, called for a connec-

tion, and presently began speaking: "Hello. Jailer? Chief's talking. Let me know when Tim O'Grady gets back. Yes, please?"

A few minutes later the telephone buzzer sounded. The chief took up the receiver, listened a moment, and then said: "Thanks!"

"He's back," he announced; "it worked."

Later that afternoon I went up to the jail and talked with Tim.

"You're under a charge of robbery," I said, "and there's a chance you'll get stuck; why didn't you 'beat it' when you had the chance?"

"Beat it?" he questioned. "Beat it? Why I'd 'a' fought t' get in here after givin' th' chief my word."

Two days later, when the case was heard in the Police Court, Tim was given his liberty, and I went with him to the chief's office.

"Tim," said the chief, "I've got a place for you in the country as a waiter in a construction camp, will you go?"

"Sure I will," replied Tim, "I wanta go straight if I can."

Several weeks passed, during which time Tim wrote letters to the chief, and then he left the camp and came to San Francisco.

"I came down to pay up my honest debts," he announced. "Course I could 'a' sent th' money by mail, but I thought I'd come down anyway."

We all regretted that he had returned, and not without reason, for he was soon in trouble again. Finally, after several escapades with the police, Tim decided to leave San Francisco. Not long ago I received a letter from him. It was postmarked with the name of a small Middle West

city, and in it Tim stated that he expected to remain in that city "for three months." I knew he was in jail.

A number of persons told the chief he was making a mistake to trust Tim, and to get him work, but I have never thought so.

CHAPTER LVI

With the approach of Christmas, 1912, the number of applicants for help increased, while the funds dwindled, and another appeal was made for resources. The response was gratifying, and during the holidays not one man was turned away. It was the final struggle; the bureau was drowning and reached out for all. Christmas Day of that year will stand out forever clear.

In the middle of the forenoon a man on crutches, one leg off below the knee, thumped to the chair beside my desk and seated himself recklessly — his crutches clattering to the floor. Immediately he drew a revolver from his pocket.

"I've come to give you a story, old man," he said. "I'm going to kill myself here and you'll get a scoop — that's what they call it, isn't it?"

I had seen the man before many times. He was from Folsom and his leg had been shot away by a drunken guard. He had stepped out of line to avoid a puddle one evening while returning in line from the rock quarry and had been bulleted down. He was a young man of splendid physique, full of the hope of life, when the crime occurred. The guard, who had previously been discharged from San Quentin because of drinking and twice "suspended from duty" at Folsom for the same reason, had been "fired." Nevertheless G—— was minus a leg and had been discharged from prison with five dollars. He had come to us in distress, yet full of inherent pride, and for three months we had been aiding him. We had also

been endeavoring to have the State Board of Prison Directors give attention to the unconscionable nature of the case and to furnish him with an artificial leg.

"I'm going to kill myself," he repeated; "I'm tired — and look at this."

He nodded toward his stump.

"I used to walk like other men. I was only serving three years, and had it most done when they did this to me. I'm ashamed to go on the streets. If my people knew it would kill them."

I suddenly realized that he had been drinking — that he was intoxicated — and knew that the situation was serious.

He was toying the revolver carelessly and I was being included in its range. So was the lady with whom I had been conversing, Helen Todd.

"Put that thing up and be sensible," I advised, reaching for the weapon.

"No, no, don't try to take it," he screamed; "I'll kill you. I'll kill all of you. I know what I'm doing. I came here to kill myself and I'm going to do it."

He placed the muzzle of the weapon at his temple, his finger trembling at the trigger.

I wanted to grab, but was afraid to do so — it might mean death.

My tension was relieved when Miss Todd spoke.

"You foolish boy," she said, "give me that."

She arose and held out her hand.

"Yes, I'll give it to you!" blazed G——, "but I'll give it to you this way."

With a rapid movement he withdrew the revolver from his temple and levelled it at her breast.

The intensity of the moment sickened me.

"Well, why don't you shoot?" she asked. "It's a

man's privilege to kill women one way or another. Shoot!"

My admiration of her intrepidity was short-lived, for he turned the revolver at me.

"No, I'm going to kill a man," he said, with an oath. "I'm going to kill somebody, and if you people try to stop me it won't be myself."

Miss Todd backed away, as I would have done had I not been seated.

I don't remember just what I said, though I remember talking to G—— and urging him to give me the revolver.

It didn't do any good. Each moment he became more careless, pointing the weapon promiscuously at himself, at Miss Todd and at me.

Repeatedly I yearned to snatch for the weapon, but was repeatedly impelled not to, fearing the movement might prove fatal. The situation lasted half an hour, during which tears trickled down G——'s face as he held the weapon to his temple again and again, while we pleaded with him to refrain.

Finally the city editor happened to pass the room on his way to the compositors. Grasping the exigency in a glance, he came in. At a table he rapidly scratched off some words on a piece of copy paper, which he laid on my desk.

"Get this out right away," he said; "the first edition goes to press in twenty minutes."

I knew it was a "stall," and on reading the scrawl saw: "Keep him talking; I'll send for a policeman."

A policeman! Anything might happen! I was suffering for relief, yet the word "policeman" staggered me. I hadn't thought of it; why should the city editor? I had felt bullets tearing through my brain, and had trembled for fear of seeing them tear through a woman's breast or a

cripple's head during thirty tense minutes, but had not thought of a solution.

When the import of the message seared itself, I got up and stood in front of G——, despite the fact that he trained the revolver toward my heart. I had arrived at a nervous crux and no longer felt fear for myself. I merely knew that I must cover, that I must prevent, G—— from seeing brass buttons.

"You're all right," I said, absently. "You're not going to kill yourself, nor any one else. To hell with your crutches, you can be a man anyway. I shouldn't talk that way with a woman present, but you've done worse."

Still obsessed, he kept the revolver pointed at me.

"I don't want to kill you; I want to kill myself," he half cried. "I want to die; what have I got to live for?"

Standing before him, I kept on talking until a lithe figure flashed past me and pinioned his arms.

It was the policeman, and G—— had not seen him in time to resist.

There was a moment's tussle, and then the policeman calmly extracted five greased bullets from the revolver which was in his hands, while G—— wept.

"I'll have to arrest him," said the officer. "It's a felony charge — carrying concealed weapons and assault to murder."

"But he didn't conceal it," I objected. "He had it in plain sight all the time. Don't arrest him; he doesn't realize what he has been doing. He'll be all right in a little while."

My pleading was ineffective; but not so Miss Todd's. The policeman finally succumbed.

"But we can't let him go out on the street this way," he compromised. "He's got to be taken care of."

"All right," I responded quickly. "I'll telephone."

Going down on the elevator G—— taxed me with infidelity.

"You called a policeman," he said. "My God, Lowrie, of all persons, YOU called a policeman."

"Yes, I called a policeman," was my hot retort, "and you're minus a loaded revolver. Why shouldn't I have called a policeman?"

"I thought you were one of us," he answered. "I thought you were one of us."

"Keep on thinking," I responded, "but don't carry any more 'guns.'"

We were obliged to use force in getting G—— into the ambulance, which was waiting at the door. He was terribly indignant.

Three days later he came into the office — crestfallen and penitent, though I hate the latter word.

"Surely, we'll get you work," I responded to his appeal. "Certainly we will."

And we did. We got him a place as cashier, the proprietor being told the facts.

G—— has "made good." He is still working in the same place.

A few nights ago I stopped in to talk with him.

"I'm writing a narrative of my life out of prison," I said, "and I want to tell about you. Will you stand for it?"

"Sure," he responded. "Why not? But look! I'm not using crutches any longer: they got me a fine leg."

With a slight limp he walked the length of the counter, and back, his face smiling.

"I lost my leg in a rotten prison," he exclaimed on returning, "but I didn't lose myself. I'll die a man."

CHAPTER LVII

On the night of January 2, 1913, seventeen months and one day after my release from prison on parole, I sat down to an "honorary" dinner with a dozen friends. During the dinner I was handed a testimonial — after it had been read aloud by one of the diners — and that testimonial, wishing me "luck" and "success," is now hanging in a frame between the windows of the room where I write. Frequently I stand before it and read the signatures. Then I go to my desk and peruse a rose-colored covered document, which I keep in a handy pigeon hole. The two, though physically separated, are concomitant. The rose-colored document is my pardon, signed by the Governor of California. The testimonial is an engrossed felicitation given to me by my friends at the dinner celebrating the event.

Yes, I am pardoned, and have been a "free man" for more than two years, yet life has been a jail — I have been behind bars. Ever since that day in August when the steel gates clanged me into the world I have been in prison, a greater prison than San Quentin, and more cold-blooded. Each day I have suffered far worse imprisonment than stone walls and steel bars. I have suffered imprisonment of sight, of salvation, of soul; I have suffered the knowledge that men and women do not understand their humanhood; that money is not wealth.

I felt all this even while the speeches were being made at my pardon dinner. I loved each speaker, sensing sincerity, but knew that the men who remained silent saw clearest.

After the ordeal — and I'm sure the dozen or so participants will "pardon" my use of the word —I walked up Market Street with the big man.

"Well, you've got it; what are you going to do with it?" he asked.

"Hang it by the neck until dead," I replied ironically. "What's the pardon of one among so many and the hangman with his deadly noose ready for miserable victims? Still, I'm going to live life as closely as possible; I'm going to get all phases, if I can."

"Look out," he admonished as he boarded a Powell-Street car. "Look out that life doesn't get you."

On Ellis Street a few minutes later I met a group of men, some of whom I knew casually.

"Come on to the 'beach,'" urged one of them. "We're on our way down to get a machine now. Come on."

I felt free. I knew that I could go to the "beach" without fear of being arrested and returned to San Quentin for violation of parole.

"Surely, I'll go," I said, "but don't forget I'm a paroled prisoner and can't take a drink."

I said that because I thought it strange that none of them had offered congratulations because of my pardon. It had been published in the evening papers. But none of them gave any indication of being aware of my new status.

"Oh, we won't forget that," said one of them. "We're all right, and there's four of us to swear that you only drink water."

"But make it white crème de menthe," advised another, with a knowing laugh.

I "made" it white crème de menthe. In the cafés along the ocean boulevard I witnessed the same old phase of night life that I had glimpsed in New York years before.

The ribaldry was identically the same and a Salvation Army girl made the usual rounds for wine-tainted dimes and nickels. Evolution is indeed tortoise-like.

It was 4 o'clock in the morning when the automobile stopped in front of my door, and I was happy to escape.

"Thanks, fellows," I falsified. "Hope I'll meet you all again."

I can still see their hands waving a merry "good-night" as the machine drew away from the curb. Yes, I still see the waving hands, white hands that had never known the "rock-pile." They were fine fellows, jolly, good-natured and had not permitted me to spend a cent. Yet they had taken me into places and had encouraged me to do things which, so far as they knew at the moment, might result in my reimprisonment.

Entering my room a moment later, I noticed my mother's picture on the dresser. It seemed to reproach me. I turned out the light and disrobed in the dark.

A few days later, in response to a number of requests for me to speak in Southern California, I made a trip to that section of the State. At San Bernardino I addressed a gathering of young men at the Y. M. C. A., and learned that I was the first speaker in their handsome new building. I also learned that the structure had been erected from funds which had been raised by public subscription, and the Judge of the Superior Court, who had conducted the campaign, told me he had used the same methods that he employed when running for office, and that even the saloon men had contributed generously toward the proposed building.

"That reminds me of an incident which occurred when Morrell and myself were 'on the road,'" I remarked. "We found a stranded theatrical troupe in one of the small interior cities, their manager having decamped with-

out paying salaries. Four of the ballet girls learned that a certain saloon keeper was a philanthropist and went to him in a body, stating their plight, and blandly asking for sufficient funds to get them to their respective homes. They promised to repay when they could. The saloon man advanced the money. Next day the representative of a local charity organization called upon the same saloon keeper and presented a petition which asked for subscription toward a fund for sending five stranded chorus girls to their homes. On asking questions the saloon man learned that the remaining members of the theatrical troupe had gone to a wealthy woman who lived in the city, and she, after learning of their predicament, had evolved the scheme of a public subscription.

"'Send two of them to me,' said the saloon man, 'and I'll see that they get home all right.' And he did."

"Well, saloon men are often charitable," mused the judge. "I found them so, at any rate."

Now, it must not be inferred from this that the judge referred to "stands in with the interests," because he doesn't. He is a genial and public-spirited gentleman, but believes that a building dedicated for uplift, for good, may consistently be erected, at least in part, from the "wages of sin."

But the most important event of my trip took place at Riverside — one of the beauty cities of California. I was scheduled to speak at the monthly dinner of the business men's association, and when I arrived at the meeting place every seat was taken. Alongside of me at the speaker's table was a grey-eyed, soft-spoken man, short and slender in stature and wearing a brown pointed beard. I sensed something distinctive in him before being introduced. He proved to be the State Assemblyman for that district and he informed me that he was chairman of the Assembly

committee on "Prisons and Reformatories," also that he was deeply interested in the subject. It was during the recess of the Legislature and he was at home for a few days.

After I had finished my address that evening the District Attorney and one of the local judges publicly indorsed what I had said, and the Assemblyman pledged himself to do his utmost at Sacramento to bring about an amelioration of prison conditions. I felt that the evening had been a very successful one.

Several weeks later a special Assembly committee was appointed to investigate charges of cruelty to prisoners at San Quentin, a recently pardoned physician having made startling affidavits against the warden and the captain of the yard. I was in Sacramento at the time and was asked to appear before the committee. On learning what the discharged physician set forth in his affidavit I immediately stated that a great deal of it was exaggerated, and that certain portions were untrue. I realized the importance of understatement rather than overstatement in an investigation of that kind, and that exaggerated or false testimony might and would be readily seized upon and used by the opposition to prison betterment as an indication that prisoners were not to be believed. This stand for the facts on my part seemed to please certain members of the committee, and after answering a number of questions I was asked if I would be willing to appear before the body when it took up its investigation in San Francisco and San Quentin, and stated that I would be glad to do so. That evening one of the members of the committee met me in the capitol building and said: "If I have my way you'll go over to San Quentin with us. You know things and places there better than we can hope to discover, and we want to get at the truth."

CHAPTER LVIII

WHILE I was anxious to serve in any capacity that might tend to bring about the abolition of torture and abuse of prisoners and do away with many of the soul-crushing methods that were making prisoners worse instead of better men, at the same time I shrank from the thought of the humiliation my presence with the investigating committee inside the prison would mean to the warden and some of the other officials whom I had criticized adversely in "My Life in Prison," and subsequent writings. But what was the warden's humiliation compared to the thousands of helpless men and women who might suffer agonies of mind and body and spirit by the infliction of unjust, unnecessary, yes, even unlawful, punishments and humiliations. So I agreed to accompany the committee should it so elect, and the apparent eagerness which the members displayed to get at the truth encouraged me to feel that the truth, untarnished, uncolored, would come out from behind the grey walls that the Christian people of California might gaze upon it and say: "Is this ours? Are we responsible for this?" For once the general public asks itself a question of that kind, results follow.

Nevertheless, despite my confidence in the committee, an element of doubt had already crept into my consciousness regarding the outcome of the investigation, for I had noticed Warden Hoyle hurrying back and forth, up and down, through the corridors and in the elevators of the Capitol building during the day.

It was apparent that he was there for the purpose of pulling political strings, that is, using extraneous influences, to prejudice the minds of the committee in favor of his vindication. I could not help but think that if everything was all right in the prisons, if there was nothing to be feared from an investigation, at least dignity, if not indifference and self-confidence would have kept him at home. It looked bad; I sniffed slaked lime; nor was I altogether wrong.

As soon as it was made public that an investigation was to be held a number of ex-prisoners came to *The Bulletin* office and offered to testify. They were closely questioned, and two of them were asked if they would make sworn statements in writing. They readily agreed to do so, and the affidavits were signed that day and presented to the committee, with the information that both of the men were willing to appear and submit to verbal examination.

Then I suddenly remembered an attorney who had been present, as a prisoner in San Quentin, when a man named Wolff had been beaten and kicked unmercifully by the Captain of the Yard, after he had been brought inside the walls following an unsuccessful attempt at escape. I recalled that this attorney had emerged from the clothing room — where the cowardly assault took place — with his face like ashes, and his hands clenched, and that he had said to me, "My God, what a monstrous thing."

So I made a hurried trip out of town and saw this attorney. I told him of the investigation and asked if he would appear as a witness and testify as to what he had seen done to Wolff.

"Oh, I couldn't," he hastily objected; "I'm on parole, and I'm trying to get a pardon. I'd get everybody down on me if I did that."

"Everybody — whom do you mean by everybody?" I asked.

"Why, the board of directors, the warden, and all the other officials," he replied.

"How about the people — the voters, the citizens?" I asked.

He looked at me and smiled.

"You know how much they stand for," he said. "They couldn't save me from vengeance — in fact the chances are they wouldn't care; they'd be indifferent."

I tried to persuade him to testify anyway, urging that other boys half-witted, like Wolff, would get similar bloody maulings, but he declined to appear. In a way, I did not blame him. What he claimed was quite true, and he was not to be censured because his personal evolution had not reached the martyr stage.

The next night, in San Francisco, I was present at the investigation. The meeting was held in a suite of one of the larger hotels whose "house detective" used to be a guard at San Quentin, and a "square" one.

The proceedings had scarcely begun when I was assailed by further misgivings as to the outcome. The committee was being represented by a deputy from the Attorney-General's office, and while the gentleman made a pretence at being unbiased the atmosphere was charged with prejudice against the two ex-prisoners who testified, and whose affidavits were read and discussed. Before the evening's session was over this deputy from a State department which has nearly always been ranged against prisoners, showed his attitude quite clearly. It became apparent that his mission was to vindicate the prison administration, and it was significant that the "law" was all on one side, for there was no attorney for the prisoners.

One of the "decisions" by him was that the investi-

gators should not go back "more than two years" in their probe.

It was like cutting off the top of a tree and examining the detruncated portion for the purpose of finding out what was wrong with the root. By establishing such a rule the investigating committee practically excluded me from becoming a witness, as I had been out of San Quentin nearly eighteen months, and most of what I had written in "My Life in Prison"—which had never been publicly denied, save my reference to ex-Chaplain Drahms—related to conditions and incidents more than two years old.

. . . . . .

If an old-time offender, a person who has plighted himself to a life of crime, enters your store as a customer and picks up a purse containing $49.99, with intent to steal it, he is guilty of petit larceny, a misdemeanor. But if a youth who has never stolen before in his life enters your store and picks up a purse containing $50, with intent to steal it, he is guilty of grand larceny, a penitentiary offence, and becomes what is generally known as a "criminal." Again, I know a five-time loser, now in San Quentin, who decided years ago to adopt daylight burglary as his profession. Daylight burglary is known as burglary of the second degree, and the maximum penalty is five years in the penitentiary. This man became an adept at his profession. During his intervals of freedom he would commit anywhere from 10 to 100 burglaries before being caught. He generally managed to get off with a "light" sentence by pleading guilty and asking the mercy of the court. He never got more than five years; in fact, most of his sentences were two or three years. He was a menace to society, a man who needed training in a new direction. You will surely agree with that statement.

But will you, can you, conscientiously agree with me that justice was done when a trio of youths who broke into a barn and stole harness after nightfall and were sentenced to the penitentiary for terms ranging from eight to fifteen years, because the crime was "burglary of the first degree"—(night time)? Indeed, you cannot. I have known young boys, sentenced for a first offence, committed in the night time, who came to prison for a decade, while dangerous professionals, operating in the daytime, got two or three years. Am I "sentimental" in protesting against such a system? As well commit one person to the hospital for contracting measles to spend one year and another to spend five years for contracting the same malady in the night time. The idea of measuring the penalty by dollars and cents, or by daylight and dark is about as sensible as to determine it by red hair or black, blue eyes or brown — as the Lombrosoians would have it done.

But, of course, in making this investigation of San Quentin your committee wasn't thinking anything about "law" save as they were "guided" by the legal adviser from the Attorney-General's office. Neither were they concerned as to the absurdity of the entire penal and punitive system. They were examining an ulcer in a terribly diseased body. And to follow out the line of thought, prisons, even conducted rationally (to employ the word for convenience) are themselves merely ulcers on a body that itself is in sore need of treatment — our civilization of commercialism and high finance, and unearned wealth going to replete the coffers of a few from the sweat and ignorance and misery of the many. There would be no need for prisons were human brotherhood, imbued with Christ's spirit, an earthly fact. At present it is only a dream, indulged by those who are denounced as "agita-

tors" or "anarchists." Some people even call them by other names.

And so, when the investigating committee went to San Quentin and spent a week interviewing prisoners and officials, I had already abandoned hope that even the superficial ulcer would be discovered. Nor was I wrong. The report, voluminous and more or less erudite — whatever that means — practically vindicated the warden and his methods. It made many of us happy, however, when the Legislature a few days later passed a law prohibiting corporal punishment in the State institutions. A step had at least been taken — a step which it had required centuries to achieve.

CHAPTER LIX

A WEEK later I was present in the Senate chamber at Sacramento when Clarence Darrow made his impassioned plea for the abolition of the death penalty. In substance, he said: "If terrorism is the object aimed at, the kettle of boiling oil should be heated with its victim inside, out upon the commons, where all eyes could see and all ears could hear. This was once the case, not so many years ago, and pickpockets used to infest the morbid crowds that came to see and hear a pickpocket tortured.

"To-day, with the fallacy of deterrentism as an excuse, many States have provided that executions shall be inside the penitentiary walls, that the victim shall be awakened, if perchance he is asleep, in the darkness and dead of night; that he shall be led to the ghostly scaffold, or still more horrifying electric chair, and hastily put to death, with a doctor and a few friends of the jailer present to duly witness the cold-blooded deed."

He said a lot more — not in a declamatory or inflamed manner, but intensely deliberately and honestly. I wish I could have gathered and retained every word. Not a sound broke the stillness of the gilded chamber, though there were many present who believed in murder for murder. The chairman of the meeting — a Senator — vented an occasional sarcastic smile and pretended to be sleepy. I venture the assertion that he subsequently voted for the retention of the death penalty. Yet, to me, it was impossible to conceive how any one could listen to Darrow's soul and remain unconvinced that it was a part

of the Creator. Of course, every soul is a part of the Creator, but some souls express more of the Creator than others.

But Darrow was preceded and followed by a number of other speakers, all earnest and sincere. And yet, after the addresses were over and I listened to comments in the corridors, I heard more than one legislator say: "Oh, he defended the McNamaras; of course he's against capital punishment."

Again I marvelled that these men, selected or supposedly selected by the people, should be unable to even separate a salient, solemn and momentous question of Christianity from an event in the life of the man whom they had heard speak. Lay minds, so called, are expected not to be able to make such separations, but the minds of the legislators, the representative, the chosen few, one would surely have thought could have ignored personalities.

The anti-capital-punishment bill was defeated by a narrow margin and human beings are to-day being taken out in the dark and sent crashing into eternity on that narrow margin.

While at Sacramento I succeeded in having one of the Assemblymen introduce a measure designed to save impecunious misdemeanants from going to jail for non-payment of fine. During my work at the police court I had seen minor delinquents, men with steady positions and families to support, sent to jail because they couldn't pay a fine of $10, imposed because of being drunk (referring to the "delinquent," not the judge) on Saturday night, thereby losing steady work and taking support from the family. The bill provided that under such circumstances the offender should be allowed to go back to his work and family and pay his fine in instalments. The

measure was defeated, thereby clinching the fact (to me) that commercialism, not humanitarianism and the best interests of society, is at the bottom of most of our so-called laws. Another bill, which a San Francisco Senator introduced for me and got through the Senate, provided that when a prisoner had been on parole two years, and had complied with all requirements, he should become free automatically. I knew several men, some of whom had been on parole for five and even six years and who desired to marry and settle down, or to engage in business for themselves, who were unable to do so, due to the fact that they were still technically prisoners and not free agents legally. This bill was also defeated.

On the other hand, many vital measures, such as the mother's pension bill and the workman's compensation act, were passed, after all stamping the 1913 Legislature as really progressive, as consisting of men who were for the people in heart but couldn't bring themselves to venture too far all at once.

. . . . . .

The following six months were a nightmare, for I became a victim of drink. How it happened is still mysterious to me. I suddenly discovered one day that I was an abject slave — that I couldn't abstain from liquor. Then began a long and fearful fight. I shall not try to tell it. Messrs. Leake and London have done so. Why spin the alliteration one name further? But I want to say this, that I found nothing save horror and degradation in liquor. It never elated me — it only depressed. I scorned the "tapering-off" method, and after many futile efforts to "stop completely," during the course of which I sometimes went two or three days without taking a drink, I was saved by a woman.

She came into the office one day and we met. Instantly

I knew that she was I, and a wave of satisfaction thrilled me.

Nothing passed between us in words, but we nevertheless met again, and at the second meeting I told her of my weakness, and how hard I was trying to conquer myself. Why I should have told her, when I had concealed, or endeavored to conceal, it from my best friends, I don't know. She was a woman whose regard and respect, if not something more lasting, I craved from the first; perhaps the "something more lasting" is what made me tell her. Subsequently I met her many times, and one day awoke to the fact that I never thought of drink while she was near. This discovery nerved me — I saw light ahead.

Finally, after many soul-crushing failures alone, summer lured me to the mountains, where with friends she was spending vacation. There the desire for liquor left me strangely. On all other occasions when I had stopped drinking for a few hours in an effort to stop altogether, my whiskyed nerves had shrieked for mercy, sometimes to such an extent that I could not hold a pencil, and always to the exclusion of sleep. But from the first moment to the last of those three weeks with her I was calm and steady, a normal creature. I have marvelled about it ever since. She did nothing save keep herself in my company as closely as convention would permit. By being with me so continuously she risked her reputation, yet never faltered. I learned that a man and a woman may associate intimately day after day without the rise of that relationship which the world imagines must prevail under such circumstances. I know this because I have experienced it. To many persons it may be unbelievable, but is none the less true. Our association during that time was that of two men, or of two women — two souls that found themselves in each other. So long as I live I can never

forget. But my body was weak, or at least had been weakened, and she gave it control.

Her eyes, her hair, her appearance? They do not count. She was just a woman — but a woman with a man's soul. I was just a man — but a man with a woman's soul. We were like, yet unlike, all other human beings.

I met her there, my spirit infinitely sad, my courage at mud-tide, my hope moribund. I came back rejuvenated, full of the joy of life, intense with purpose to fulfil my destiny.

CHAPTER LX

A FEW days ago, in New York City, I boarded a surface car at Broadway and Sixth Avenue, intending to ride a few blocks in response to a telephonic appointment. Instead, I rode to the end of the line, and then back to the other end, all the time, so far as intervals between his duties would permit, talking to the conductor. When I got on the car I had not paid any particular attention to the man in charge of the vehicle, but when he came for my fare, and I looked up into his face, I recognized him as one who had spent ten years behind the walls of San Quentin.

"Hello," he laughed. "What are you doing in this part of the world?"

"'Digging Indians and shooting gold,'" I lightly replied. "But I'm glad to see you. How are things going?"

"Come out on the platform," he invited, "I can't talk here."

During the next two hours we conversed intimately. He seemed to be relieved at being able to talk freely. He had been working for the street-car company five years, without the fact of his imprisonment known.

"If they found it out I'd be fired," he told me, "and I live in constant fear that it may be discovered. I'm married and I've got one of the swellest kids you ever saw, and my wife knows everything. Yet I can't feel happy. There's a weight over me all the time. I don't suppose I'll ever get over it." He stopped a moment to assist an

old lady to alight, and then continued: "I don't know how you feel, but somehow I've never felt like a real human being since the day I left that place — though I've kept straight as a die. I've met dozens of the boys, and they've all told me the same thing; that they have a sort of, well, a sort of bruised feeling — I guess that expresses it — and can't get themselves back to where they were before they 'fell.'"

I knew exactly how he felt, but tried to deceive him.

"You've still got the same curly hair that you had before you went down," I offered, "and you've still got the same capacity for enjoying life without blight, if you'd only let yourself do it. Forget the past; what's the use of living something that's dead?"

"But I've been trying to forget for five years, and it's no use. To-morrow I may be looking for a job on account of the past. Do you suppose I can forget that?"

All this, and a lot more, was said resignedly and yet not pessimistically. Before I left him he gave me his address and asked me to take dinner with his "family" one evening. I promised to do so, but did not get the opportunity; New York, whence I had gone in response to a number of invitations for speeches, kept me too busy. I had left California and its green hills only to encounter snow in the mountains. A little girl, the daughter of a railroad man, who was on the train with her parents, had never seen snow before, and wanted to know if it was "white grass." And at Truckee a number of passengers got off and had a snowball fight. Our train was scheduled to reach Chicago in three days and pulled into the station there exactly on time. One of the passengers, a deputy sheriff, bound for Long Island to bring a criminal offender back to California, afforded me considerable diversion. I had met him the first morning out, while on

the back platform of the train. He came out there, pulled a flask of whisky from his pocket, and offered me a drink. I declined, and after he had swallowed some of the stuff he told me who he was, and why he was going East. I could not help noticing his yellow shoes, nor could I help hearing them squeak when he walked. They were painfully and bucolically new, as were his garments. In reply to a question he stated that the prisoner whom he had been commissioned to bring back had committed larceny, but before we got to Chicago the crime had grown through various stages until it was murder. Every passenger on the train was confidently apprised that yellow shoes was a "sheriff" and that he was going after a "bad" man. I could not help hearing several of these "confidences." According to the interest displayed by each auditor the "sheriff" either extended or suppressed himself. In turn, the Long Island prisoner after whom he was going was guilty of larceny, bigamy, robbery, arson and murder. And to the expressions of wonder that he dared to go after such a bad one and bring him back alone, the "sheriff" patronizingly pooh-poohed that he had "handled hundreds of 'em." It was very amusing. Yet he wasn't a hard or unfeeling man at heart. During the trip I got to know him quite well, and found that he possessed a good measure of the milk of human kindness. Still, when we were crawling through the busy railroad yards into teeming Chicago, I couldn't resist handing him one of my cards, and the expression on his face when he read my name was droll. He had heard of me, and we shook hands. "I never thought to ask your name," he half laughed.

After a day in Chicago, visiting friends, I proceeded to Auburn, New York, where I was scheduled to speak at the State prison.

It was the first time I had faced an audience of pris-

oners, and there were 1400 of them. When I got on my feet I felt nervous; I realized that I had the chance to perhaps make some of them think. I don't know just what I said, but it must have "taken," for I was frequently interrupted by applause, and at the conclusion of the address, besieged with interesting questions. Most of the queries evinced intelligent thought; none were frivolous or irrelevant.

The following day I received a written order from Warden Rattigan to visit the prison at will and to go whereever I wished. "Billy" Duffy, a slim young fellow, serving twelve years, and sergeant-at-arms of the prisoners' mutual welfare league, was assigned as my cicerone. We indeed went "everywhere," even into the "jail," the "isolation" ward and the death chamber. In the latter dreadful place, the guard in charge, after explaining the method of electrocution in detail, asked me if I cared to sit in the "chair," and when I drew back with a quick declination, seemed surprised.

"Why, all visitors like to do that," he said, half apologetically; "they like to tell their friends that they've sat in the chair."

"But I am thinking of that wretched woman they brought in from Salamanca to-day," I mumbled. "She's doomed to have her life snuffed out in that thing and she's the mother of children."

"Yes, it's too bad," was the answer. "We've already sent off two women in this State. It's a bad business — a bad business."

"Do you believe in it — in capital punishment?" I asked.

"I certainly don't," he replied. "It's a fierce proposition to have to strap a man in that chair while the priests

are praying out loud, and then strip his corpse a few minutes later so the doctors can cut him up."

"So the doctors can cut him up?" I questioned. "What do you mean?"

"Why, it's the law," he replied. "Ev'ry man we send off has to have his brain examined before it's cold."

This was news to me, and interesting.

"How long has that been the law?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Quite a long time."

"And how many 'warm' brains have been examined?" I persisted.

"Couple o' hundred, I guess," was the reply. "Why?"

"Oh, I was just wondering if a murderer's brain had been established," I said, dully. "But, of course, it hasn't or we'd have read scientific articles about it. They're just like you and me, aren't they?"

"Yes, I guess they are," he said, seriously. "I've seen some mighty fine men sent off; men that had it 'on me' for intelligence, and other ways. But they've just passed a law that all executions will be at Sing Sing; we'll soon be rid of the 'chair' here, thank God. I don't sleep well for a week after seeing one of them bodies cut open."

In the "isolation" ward near by I glimpsed five stolid faces in five "condemned" cells — one of them a Chinaman. Farther on I stopped and chatted with various "incorrigibles." It was significant that the condemned and the "incorrigibles" were celled together. Perhaps the most interesting man I found was Jack Murphy, a lifer, who had been in the prison ten years and in "solitary" two years. He had a mother cat with three kittens in his cell and at first seemed disinclined to talk. But I liked him; he was slender, and his greying hair plenteous.

Also, his voice had the vibration of fellowship. It was not until I told him I had "done time" that he "loosened up."

"I thought you were a prison reformer," he said; "you know what I mean. You don't look like a guy that's done a long stretch."

During the next hour Jack and I became friends. I have since received several letters from him. The following is a portion of the first one:

"135 State St., Auburn, N. Y.
"April 20, 1914.

"Dear Donald: Yours arrived and received a royal welcome. I sincerely hope this reaches you before you leave St. Louis. I have spent many happy days in that good old town, Don, and hope your visit shall be a happy one also.

"Well, this is a beautiful night, a silver night, and a fitting sequel to the golden day just passed. The sun has been shining nice and warm all day, and just about five o'clock we had a little shower. It lasted just long enough to freshen things up and left a clear blue sky behind. Just like troubles, eh? Sorrow may seem dark and drear for a time, but eventually it brings the sunshine out from the clouds and the sky seems more bright after. Last Friday was the anniversary of my eleventh year in my little niche of shame, and I have seen much and felt more in that time, believe me, Don. But it's all in the bit, and if a fellow is foolish enough to cut to the break in the deck he has no kick coming if the other fellow holds the best hand. And it's only a fool who will not profit by his mistakes. Now, please do not misconstrue this, old man. I do not wish to convey the idea that I have reformed, for I have not reached the "Turn of the Balance"

yet, but if I do, and perhaps I have a little yearning that I may, why I — well, I hope I can be just about as good as I have been bad. I have been thinking a whole lot since you left me that day and I wish I could meet such men as you every day. It helps, Don. A hearty handclasp and a pleasant smile works wonders in the heart of the man who is down. They say a man can't come back. That's foolish, Don. A knockdown is only a rest which a fellow can have while he is taking the count. He can then come up fresh to renew the fight. Well, I suppose I have tired you with all this prattle, so I will close by wishing you all the beautiful things this world affords. Sincerely yours,

"JOHN E. MURPHY, No. 32,378."

"P.S.— I expect the book most any day now. Thank you, Don. Good night. Write or drop a card when you can; I shall welcome either.

"JACK."

To-day, as you read these words, the man who wrote them is cooped in a stone cell. True, he has a yard — a place about twelve feet square, with walls fifteen feet high, and a netting over the top so that he cannot throw communications to the men on either side — each man in the "isolation" ward at Auburn has a yard, which means a patch of sky. I know in my heart that Jack Murphy, Auburn No. 32,378, is a big man — a big man gone wrong. I didn't intend to write about him at all, but his personality forced it. I hope the day will come when he will get his chance. I believe it will.

CHAPTER LXI

FOLLOWING my "convict" guide I passed reluctantly through the "cell blocks" and the various shops. Although I was "getting more" than the average visitor — a prisoner was piloting me and, besides, I had "been there myself"— I nevertheless wanted to go more slowly. In his conversation "Billy" repeatedly referred to "Tom," by whom he meant Hon. Thomas Mott Osborne, erstwhile Mayor of Auburn, and a prominent man in New York State affairs. "Tom" had served a week in the prison only a short time before, having voluntarily done so in order to study conditions. During that week he had been punished for "refusing to work" and had lived the life of a prisoner so faithfully that all the inmates of the place had sponged his sincerity and felt that he was the "real thing."

"Billy" didn't know that I was a guest at "Tom's" home, though he did know that we were acquainted. So in order to get the prisoners' estimate of the man I encouraged "Billy" to talk about him. Personally I had found "Tom" to be a hard thinker, well-balanced and keen to understand prison mismanagement. It was chiefly due to his interest in bettering prison conditions that I was East, for he had written and asked me to come and speak before the New York State Prison Commission conference, and had guaranteed expenses.

"There's one man who's all right," said "Billy," in reply to a question. "There's no bunk about him; he's

our friend, and we're going to make the league a success. What's more, a lot of us are going to make good when we get out. Take my pal, Bob C——, for instance. He's going out in a few days after serving a stretch of eleven years, and he intended to get even until 'Tom' came along. Now he's going out to make good, and 'Tom' has a job for him."

By the "league" the speaker meant the recently organized body within the prison whereby the prisoners were pledged to govern themselves and maintain order. Save a very few, all the prisoners had joined, had elected their delegates and an executive committee to pass on matters of discipline and to petition for improvements. I had attended a meeting of this executive committee the day before, and was mightily interested. Among other matters, the question of porcelain or agateware drinking cups for the cells had come up. It was asserted by one speaker that "no matter how often a man cleans a tin cup it will rust and be unhealthy." Another member of the committee had figures to show that porcelain cups would be cheaper in the long run. After half an hour's discussion it was resolved that a report be made to the warden, recommending the purchase of sanitary cups for the cells. And this was but one item among dozens that were taken up and thrashed out calmly. One day I shall report the meeting in full — it deserves it.

Before leaving Auburn I spoke at a meeting of the guards and officers of the prison. It was a novel experience — an ex-convict addressing prison officials — but they applauded just the same.

In the city of Auburn itself I spoke at one of the churches, also at Osborne Hall, and the response was gratifying. The people seemed truly intent on learning what they could about their prisons, and how to deal

with criminal offenders. After speaking to the women prisoners, 130 in number — (all women State prison offenders in New York are sent to Auburn) — I proceeded to New York City, where the train arrived ten hours late. owing to a blizzard. On the way to my hotel, after midnight, I was accosted three times — once by a man, who said he was hungry; twice by miserable looking young women. I heard that New York was "closed up" and was therefore surprised. And in using the word "miserable" I mean it. The "flashy" and "successful" walkers had long before retired with the night's "earnings" safely stockinged. It was the "has beens," the ones verging toward insanity or suicide, that were "bold" enough to stop a man with a suitcase at 1 o'clock in the morning.

New York proved intense. It would require columns to tell about it. Ensconced in a room that was fearfully steam heated, I found myself wondering. Only a few years before this identical hotel had been considered a "top notcher," but I grasped, from the rented street floor and the frayed carpet in my room, that it deteriorated into a "has been." The next day, in conversation, a chance acquaintance told me that "New York changes every six months; don't hope to keep up with it unless you stay right here."

That afternoon I spoke before the Colony Club, and some of my "auditors" took siestas while I frantically tried to "bring them out of it."

The following night, at the Berkeley Lyceum, a small, partly bald man arose from his seat after I had finished speaking and started to question me regarding my views anent a "court of rehabilitation." After fifteen minutes' discussion with him, during which I felt that he had the subject well in hand, the chairman — back of me — hastily whispered: "That's Roland Molineaux."

With a letter of introduction I proceeded to Sing Sing the next day, and was shown through the prison by acting Principal Keeper McInerney. The veteran, Connaughton, was on his death bed.

In the execution chamber McInerney lingered. "We sent off seven here in one morning not long ago," he said, his eyes half closed. "It was fierce. We had to build extra shelves for the bodies. Come out here, I'll show you."

I followed him into an anteroom and saw the shelves, with one operating table in the centre of the dismal place.

"They came too fast for the doctors," he explained, "we had to do something to take care of them — and one was only a kid. That was the hardest part of all, handling him after he was dead. You see, I liked him, and he had smiled only a few minutes before, while I was helping to strap him in the chair."

I shuddered. Murder was too close for equanimity.

"But, of course, you believe in the chair?" I half questioned.

His tall, well-proportioned figure straightened as he looked at me searchingly.

"Do you see this scar?" he asked, pointing to an ugly disfiguration on the left side of his face.

I nodded.

"Well, that was done by a 'con' who meant to murder me; and yet, if he'd killed me, and I could have a say, I wouldn't kill him — at least not in cold blood — that's what I think of the chair!"

"But how can you keep on helping to 'put off' men when you feel that way?" I asked.

"Well, I've been a prison guard twenty years, in spite of politics, and I've got to live — it's the only thing I know," he replied. "Some one else would do it if I didn't

— yet I dread 'putting off' the gunmen; they go in less than two weeks."

Going through the cell house a few minutes later I was thoroughly disheartened. The cells were three and one-half feet wide and seven feet long. When the bunk was let down for the night the inmate had no room at all — he was like a fly in a trap; or worse, because a fly can walk upside down. I was told that the walls of the cells sweated at times so that one's name could be traced in the moisture. I thought of the expanse of sand at Dipsea, and how I had thoughtlessly written my name close to the incoming tide only a few months before. Perhaps a "lifer" in one of these cells had been fingering his name on the wet wall at the same moment.

At lunch Warden Clancy imparted the information that he was "going to quit," that "politics" was "too much" for him. Inquiry developed that he had been in office only a few months. "The warden of this place has got to be an out-and-out politician, not a man," he droned. "I've made lots of improvements, and had lots of painting done, but what's the use?"

Dr. Stagg Whitin, of the national committee on prison labor, who was at the table with us, looked at me with raised eyebrows, and I nodded reply to his thought. Here was a warden with 1500 human derelicts under his charge who believed that "lots of painting" meant "improvement." Still, Clancy had a humane soul. That was evinced in the way he treated the prisoner who waited on us, as well as by the manner in which he greeted the mother of a convict in his office a few minutes later.

CHAPTER LXII

THE next ten days I spent with my aunt in New England. I had not seen her in fifteen years, but when I got to the house I walked around to the back door and into the kitchen.

"Is supper ready?" I asked, unconcernedly, starting to take off my coat.

She turned, and for a second stood amazed, before her sense of humor responded.

"I'll look and see what I have in the cupboard," she said, turning away and humming to herself as she disappeared through the swinging door. Presently she returned.

"There's some cold baked beans, and — and some strawberry jam," she announced. "Will that do?"

At the words "strawberry jam" we both laughed. It recalled the days in my boyhood when she had surreptitiously given me jam sandwiches, against the "strict orders" of my mother that I was "not to eat between meals." On two different occasions after devouring the delectable sandwich on the cellar stairway I had gone back to the sitting-room and to my mother, innocent-looking as a new fountain pen, only to suffer ignominious detection because of sundry smears in the vicinity of my ears and eyebrows which my traitorous shirt sleeves had failed to assimilate during the process of destroying the evidence.

"Yes; that will do," I said. "And how have you been?" Whereupon we saluted each other as became aunt and nephew who have been separated for a long time.

The weeks that followed were happy ones, spent with my cousins, and looking up old scenes and faces, and as the day drew near when I was to speak in Philadelphia, I was tempted to cancel the engagement.

On returning from Philadelphia to New York I met my mother. She had been away over the ocean when I arrived in the East. Although I was kept busy, speaking and attending to business matters, as well as responding to social invitations, I spent the major portion of the next two weeks with my mother.

My talk in Philadelphia, at the Broad Street Theatre, had attracted considerable attention and I was asked to speak in that city again. The letter stated that the discussion was to be held under the auspices of the Contemporary Club, at the Bellevue-Stratford (Philadelphia's de luxe hotel) and was to be a dress affair.

In New York I had several times been invited to dinner, and on going had found myself to be the only man present not in evening clothes. At the Carnegie Lyceum, where Governor West, Governor Glynn, Thomas Mott Osborne and others addressed a mass meeting, I had been the only man in the one hundred or more who occupied seats on the stage who was not in evening dress, and somehow, despite the fact that it made me conspicuous, I revelled in not being an apparent slave to a needless convention. But when the dinner invitations kept coming, I finally "fell," and had myself mauled by a tailor. So, when the Contemporary Club's request for me to partake in a discussion stated "evening dress," I was rather glad that I was "qualified" to appear; especially was this true when the meeting took place, for I am sure a great many persons were honest in shaking hands with me at the close and in expressing a determination to urge the changes that had been suggested. There were four speakers at the meeting

— Mr. Osborne, Warden McKenty of the Eastern Penitentiary (Cherry Hill), a judge of the Superior Court of Philadelphia and myself. The judge spoke last and said he believed in punishment. He told how he had given two offenders twenty-five and fifteen years, respectively, only the week before. It was significant that, while the rest of us had been listened to attentively, with frequent bursts of applause, the judge's remarks were half drowned by the rustle of programmes and even by whispering — the latter supposed to be a very "rude" manifestation in such select society. By the very blandness of his blindness I think the judge did a lot of good. He had listened to three speakers, all believers in the revolution of the present prison system, he had seen and heard the response of the auditors, and yet got up and preached the ancient doctrine of retaliation and revenge. What he said furnished an excellent background for what the rest of us had pleaded. It made our picture stand out clear. It also bore out what I have long contended: that the best method to make persons think is to let them get all possible views on a subject.

I made two subsequent addresses in Philadelphia, and also visited the Eastern Penitentiary. This prison is built similar to the hub and spokes of a wheel. A central rotunda controls each row of cells, one of the rows being reserved for women. I had heard a great many fearful stories of "Cherry Hill," as it is called, and was glad of the opportunity to visit the place. Warden McKenty acted as our guide (Thomas Osborne and some ladies were in the party), but told us to stop where we willed and talk freely to whom we would. I learned that he had been warden more than six years, having formerly been a policeman, and then a detective. I also had heard from many sources that he was "the best warden Pennsylvania ever

had," and I found this estimate to be a correct one. He talked more sensibly, and with a deeper understanding of fundamental prison principles than any prison officer of my acquaintance. We learned that he had overturned the system which he found in the prison on taking up the duties of warden; that he had established trade shops; that he had abolished torture, and reduced punishments to the minimum; that he had fought for and won a parole system, and a number of other things. But the main indication of the man's character came from the many men with whom I indiscriminately talked in different cells and shops. Not a dissenting note as to Warden McKenty's "squareness." The cells in "Cherry Hill" are the best I have ever seen. They are large, some of them being 12 by 12 by 12, or approximately so, each cell with an individual window, opening out doors, and each cell provided with toilet and electric light. We found many of the men, and nearly all of the women, working in their cells. Wages are paid, and the prisoners permitted to support their families. There was a noticeable absence of a "jail smell"— the place was really clean and sanitary, with lots of air and sunshine. I noted scores of cells in which there were potted plants and flowers. These looked healthy, whereas I remember a fern-ball which died in a California cell, in spite of the sustained efforts of its owners to keep it alive, because of the deadly miasma. A number of pet dogs and cats about the corridors and in the yards amused me. They all seemed to be on good terms, and happy. I tasted the stew which was served (the prisoners eat in their cells; there is no dining hall) at noon; also the bread. Both were palatable, and I was particularly impressed by the fact that a guard did the serving. In filling each bowl he stirred around in the kettle to make sure that each ration contained a portion of meat and vegetables. Each

ration of stew was generous, and there was no stint on bread. Each prisoner takes care of his personal eating utensils, and has hot water for the purpose. The dishes all looked spotless. Much more could be written about this prison, but not now. The question I asked myself was: "Suppose Warden McKenty should die to-night?" There's nothing on the statute books to perpetuate his methods. An ignorant and totally unfit political heeler might succeed him, and undo all he has done. After all, McKenty was but a benevolent autocrat — an enlightened despot — he was but one man. In a way it was bad that he should be warden, for the people were satisfied with the prison. They felt that they had a good man there, and should an effort be made to secure legislation toward perpetuating the very ideas he had worked out, there would be opposition. There would be a protest that Warden McKenty and the penitentiary were all right and should not be molested. Strange to say, McKenty himself has not this latter viewpoint. He has not even after six years in office, the least idea that he owns the place. One of the last things he said to me was: "I get a good deal of real pleasure out of this job. Many on old-timer, many a man that I caught and sent up when I was a detective, I've boosted along in here, got him to thinking right, and sent him out on parole to make good for me. And lots of them have made good. Why, two of them came back of their own accord, and asked me to take them in as they were afraid they were slipping and didn't want to throw me down. They got to drinking, you see, and knew they'd fall again."

CHAPTER LXIII

At Wheeling, W. Va., the warden of the penitentiary at Moundsville was present when I spoke, and invited me to run down and visit the prison. I did so the following day, and found the contract-labor system in vogue. The prisoners, more than half of whom were negroes, were working in shops making clothes, brooms, whips and other articles. The shops were fearfully crowded and hot, but each man was working furiously, and I learned the reason from the guard who was showing me through. They were paid for all work done in excess of a daily task. In the dining-room there were swarms of flies, though the place looked and smelled clean. It was also well lighted, but could scarcely help being, as it was practically outdoors, being open on three sides. I noted ceiling fans, and was informed that these were set in motion by electricity during mealtimes on hot days. This is an innovation which could be imitated at no very great expense in other prisons. The chapel at Moundsville is the best prison chapel I have seen anywhere. It is built after the pattern of a theatre, and is provided with 1500 extra large and comfortable seats. Yet I was told by an ex-prisoner, whom I met at the station while waiting for the train back to Wheeling, that a "lifer" who had tried to escape a few weeks before had been beaten unmercifully and that flogging was still permitted by law. I asked him why there was such a large percentage of negroes in the prison, with the percentage of population in the State only 31.

"Oh, I reckon it's 'cause we's ignorant," he said sadly.

"And you know a colored man don't get the same chance's a white man in court."

I found a band of earnest women in Wheeling, working for suffrage, and on each of the three occasions when I spoke there I made it a point to tell how equal suffrage was working in California.

I also learned in Wheeling that West Virginia was to become a prohibition State on the first of July (1913). There seemed to be a considerable difference of opinion as to the advisability of the inhibition. One man said to me: "The rich, and we middle-classers, will be able to have our beer or wine, but not the thousands of coal miners."

Another man said: "I think it's a good thing. There was too much drinking in the coal regions, and without it the miners will do better work, and won't think so much about striking."

I thought of the horrors which were occurring in Colorado.

"Isn't it their miserable lot that makes coal miners drink?" I asked.

He wouldn't admit the word "miserable," but did grant that they were "poor, and lived lives of semi-slavery."

"And will these living conditions, these working conditions, change after prohibition becomes the law?" I asked.

He thought they would, that many of the men who drank would devote the money thus spent now to the care of their wives and children.

"So that the discontent and the fight for better pay will become less intense; so that the miners will be lulled into a condition of inert stupor; so that the coal barons may become richer," I retorted, half hotly. "I hold that anything, no matter what, that tends to make a workingman less keen to the injustice being done him, is bad for everybody. I'd let the coal miner have his beer if he

wants it, especially if it will help him to gain more safe and sanitary living and working conditions."

We had a long and heated discussion, but he couldn't see my point. He contended that the "miners must be cared for by 'the people,' and it's bad for them to drink."

A few days later a tragic, preventable disaster sent 158 of these dangerously dissatisfied coal miners into eternity, leaving wives and little babies to fight the fight for food and shelter alone. And some of these little babies may grow up to grace prison cells or brothel stalls, long after their fathers' bones have bleached in death.

And this brings me back to California, with its lure and its splendor. For nearly three years I have been walking the face of the earth trying to find out what it all means, and most of that time has been spent in California. I have walked through dark valleys, and I have looked at the stars from the mountain tops. I have gone down to the depths of human suffering, and have met big, strong, far-seeing and fearless men and women. I have learned that all men are weak, and that all men are strong. That within each one is the other, either lurking to slay or biding the moment for succor from trouble and despair. I came out of prison filled with the hope that I might do something to help prisoners. That hope has not gone unrealized, and I am glad, but by no means satisfied, for I have come to learn that the regeneration of prisons is of superficial importance compared to the social regeneration that must surely come. I have met or talked or listened, or read the written words of Clarence Darrow, Lincoln Steffens, Norman Hapgood, Stitt Wilson and others. I have seen my patron, the big man, stand like a lone lighthouse with the waters of human greed and misunderstanding swirling and sucking at his feet, and beating up into his face. His example, his courage, but above all his

singleness and intense sincerity of purpose, have imbued me with a desire to help in the bigger fight. And this shall be my purpose in life — to go on and on, with what strength I can muster and retain, giving out the truth that has come to me: That no man condemn another; that brotherhood is a fundamental thing; that the proletariat shall not be expected to go to church and worship God on Sunday after spending six days of the week in a man-made hell; that industrial justice must be done; that Christianity must become a living fact.

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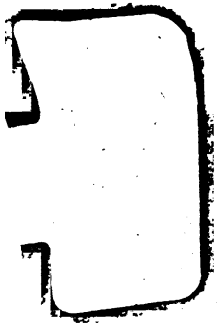
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